

A PISTOL SMUGGLED IN TYPHUS

(after Rimbaud)

derek beaulieu

A black, E white, I red, U green, O blue: vowels,
soon I'll mourn your hidden shrieks:

A: a corset embroidered with a cirrus wave of carrion,
clouding the sky over a dead pigeon,
an apple gone soft in the swelter of summer
as flies crawl across a tyrant's open eye.

The swirling maggots blister and hatch to
a static of blindness. E: An iceberg reflected in a cataract iris.

A snowy quadrangle afloat in a sea of cream,
the hateful hood over a chessboard knight;

I, the spittle of opium flowers nestled within a blistered palm,
a cracked brick held in anger above a burning crowd.

U: shards of broken glass
across the folded banner of Muhammad;

O: the tattered crash of porcelain
on the stones of Roman villas,
mined from the pits of Afghanistan:
—set ablaze in your accusing stare.

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