On the Other Side of Walls

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on the other side of walls

his polyphony
pulsed and warped walls between our rooms
    like appoggiaturas against tissue paper
delicate and transparent

do you know how to tell
if bone china
is authentic?
you can see your
fingers through it
in the faintest light
transparency validates it

walls were just motets censoring our faces
night merely undersides of rocks
    shielding us from
    knife-points hitchhiking on air
I could hear every vibrato
every trill in his torso
and his hands pawing the walls
fell into my pillow
I knew when he cried
I felt it slice my ear
maybe it was my geisha way
    bowed head and small steps
that assumed he was
consecrated and weather worn
beatified by the bass in his voice
but he purged my fairytale myths
    with his post-requiem stupor
his head swollen and drowned
his pallbearer blisters catching the
deluge swinging off his cheeks

how many walls have I touched
how many rooms have I slept in
where children were conceived
where sisters discovered death
where life poured out thick and humorless
    through pores and tear ducts
and with a twinge of teeth
mothers realized their children no longer
craved the tepid warmth
    of their milk
his father died here
in this bed garnished with my limbs
and it was where he was born
    that's what he told me
blood and salt like termites into the bedposts
his mother's screams staining the walls
I dream him now
    raisined and maroon
twitching here where my arms lay
swallowing his fifth breath
he was crying then, too

how many nights
have his intercessions and
oratorios filed mutely
through veins in the walls
forcing my eyes focused
    knowing he was inches away
I am unable to tunnel
    routes under the foundation to
whisper him lullabies or breast-feed him
wildflowers and stars
because the bed will be empty
all the life in it
drained away and evaporated
his father's fingerprints lost
behind the bone china