

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Shadow

Sam Chiang

I

There is a world of light
And one of shadows
A union of black and white.

II

The shadow of fire
Ripples like water.

III

When shadows intertwine with us
We grow further apart.

IV

The blanket of eclipse marched,
Swelled like ink in water
Sounding a million battle horns
Over the blazing sky.

V

He droned with shadows,
Staggered in circles
Before the sun, his advocate
Told him to look up,
And he saw the sky's enormity.

VI

On the cliffs,
Shadows made faces

Down here,
We spun in circles on the ground
Under the towering shade of time.

VII

Projected against the white wall screen
We follow our shadows
There isn't a way to the other side.

VIII

The intensity of shadows
Grows beyond its puppet string—
Its muteness.

IX

The pantomime of shadows
Created landscapes
Without dimension.

X

Flames painted murals
Of graves
Of shadows apart from men.

XI

Smoke seeped with heat and nausea
Its eclipse greased the brightness
Of the concrete.

XII

The last tree
Its shadow danced hysterically
In circles,
Around its leash.

XIII

Driving through the blank night
Without a single streetlight,
The shadows will finally hide.