

# Lost Kites

by Christian Bell

1

Unseen, he slides through cracks, unbound, liquid fear of mothers.

2

The camera arcs a left-right panorama but could not see below or above. Jones, the station operator, tells his visitors, here I see the world, not mentioning what's missing.

3

She stands on the building's roof, God's view of an empty city. Flags rustle in wind. No cars. No people. Clouds scatter overhead, lost kites eastward to barren places. She awoke and someone had taken an eraser to the world. Except her. Why? She screams, echoless, chases the descending sun.

4

Unseen, L and N sneak into a dark alleyway, kiss. Both were married to others; infidelity, here, was criminal. There are cameras everywhere, she said, her back pressing brick wall, fingers feverish unbuttoning his shirt. Yes, that war was lost long ago, he said, his hands sliding up her legs, reaching bare hips. Here they have free space, unbound from pious spouses, as whirring cameras search for those who dare.

5

He draws shades so no one will see. He disconnects the phone, turns off the computer, destroys each television with bullets. All pictures frames go face down. The outside world, still present as he can hear airplanes flying overhead, thumping bass of passing cars. He inserts earplugs. Sun goes down and he refuses to turn on lights. At night he cries as he recalls the time his father made him

sit in a dark closet as punishment. Now, unseen, he deletes future years, longs for the comfort of broken childhood.

