

Dinner at Yamashiro, 2010

In late September
Santa Ana winds rip through the city,
cutting to unmask an invisible knife
an urban, iron-hued beauty.
For now summer churns
smog into air we can taste,
a seared sky sinking
down to the streets.
From a Japanese courtyard
in the Hollywood Hills
the city's spell
is more disappearing act than charm,
U.S. Bank Tower indiscernible,
other buildings scattered
like confetti.
My mother and I eat together less,
brief encounters now to share
a year's worth of things
I haven't done, how I don't dress like I should,
how I can't find a job.
The sun sets its earth turning machinery
so slow I tilt,
the city still covered
under a great cataract,
lights dampened.
When dusk finally washes the sky a smoky blue-black
as if it were clean,
she stands, impatient, to hug me goodbye.
Such a pity,
she says, *You used to have so much potential.*