

Valerie Ang

Pointing at the Moon

i. Superstition

Her Buddhist mother
always told her not to point
her finger at the

moon. Whoever lives
there (Jesus, Chang'e, Chang'e's
rabbit) leaps down with

that silver scythe to
slash across the tender flesh
behind each ear, and

stops the flurried pulse
beneath. My Christian father
doesn't know about

the moon, but he knows
he and he and *she and she*
and he knows hell and

heaven too. A shame
his godless daughter fell so
far from Eden's trees.

ii. She & She

Her smile curves, razor-
sharp, a wafer stolen from
Communion, bitten

deep—a fragment of
salvation, red with altar
wine. We linger late

outside the white door
after church, alone except
the watchful crescent

moon: the sour mouth
of some uneasy god who
(like me) has been told

in words and not in
words that He is hard to love.
But we are ready

to dethrone our gods.
We link our fingers, laughing
lip to lip, and point.

Sonnet for Ah Gong

You gave me flowers for my birthday once:
a dozen origami tulips, each
burgundy petal specked with clear glue, bright
like dew, unfolding to the desk-lamp sun,
their plastic pot swirled white on blue like one
of Grandma's china bowls. But weight betrays
this garden: I can hold it up between
a single thumb and finger. Just like you—

diminished now to skin on toothpick bone,
your hawker-centre clattervoice a dried-
out husk. You linger on the sofa in
the dusklight, watching Teochew opera while
the last day draws towards the door, and in
my room upstairs the paper flowers bloom.

There Are No Magpies

on earth tonight. They've
gone to keep those romantics
aloft: the deathless

weaver and her love,
a mortal man, allowed to
meet just for a day

above the Milky
Way on feathers and hollow
bones. But down here all

wings beat the air like
hands already fluttering
farewell. No bridge to

you, my cirrus-wisp
of a lover—not even
for one night a year.