

At the End of the Silk Road

You might start here
With the winged invisible spirits,
The blessing of the machines

*Bless them to make them work.
They are good because they work hard,
not because you succeed, but
because they work hard*

You might continue through to the city
where the slack and heaving weight
of bodies
pushed together
breathe in and breathe out;

the street divides,
shops move, change
their names,
divine their futures elsewhere.

They breathe in and the street collapses,
buildings fall together.
You look for yourself in the rubble
of myth, you find
An emblem, a doll, a talisman.
Here is your patch of land

I want to ask if your peach garden is being
cared for
by anyone.

You return to the rural, to find
the people
who look like you—or like you did.
But the space around you itself is moving
not only the train,
not just the people, their chatter,
the susurrations
of voices
like a brush fire,
pushing on, expanding . . .

It may take a hundred years for the land to be
useful again,
after it has been used up

But it only takes one generation for a story
to be lost
so you tie them with string and blessings.

I would like to know if anyone is caring
for your peach garden.

I would like to know how you prune it
how you get the fruit ready for market.

A throng of voices now.

Now a poem is happening
in the village.

It breathes out,
becomes a hole in the sky
becomes a train, going elsewhere.

A million more breaths and it is
the new city.

I want to know if anyone is caring for your peach garden
because I am not sure
how to care for mine.

I do not trust the shamans and mystics,
Tying me to legends,

I want to know because I have made a misery
of being myself

What land is your garden founded in? What powers
make it shoot up?

make its stalks and tendrils limber
with energy, and curiosity

What must be said to bring them into being?
I mean the how and when of this,
your coming season.

SephRodney