



---

## Bruised Unlicensed Literacy

*Mary Nyquist*

### **Bleus**

*Sur un fond d'amnésie délibérée s'exposent ici des indices circonstanciels d'une possible intériorisation de la violence. L'historique n'en serait pas précisé, les bleus d'origine inconnue étant présentés par Mary Nyquist comme pièces à conviction.*

### **Savoir illicite**

*Lire entre les lignes peut être un mode de vie, suggère Mary Nyquist, dans un style allusif et déterminé, évoquant une aptitude acquise à déchiffrer l'implicite, une espèce d'accoutumance.*

### **Bruised**

"Can't say, really. Honestly can't remember."

(Oh, God, wish she hadn't noticed.

Caught, again, without any cover-up,

No ordinary fall, no distress.

Must seem my lips are sealed on purpose,

Tongue tied to secure a name or deed.

But can you withhold what you can't recall?

Not the foggiest memory.

It could have been any time, any where:

Careening down the corridor,

Thwacking a door-jamb the day before.

Nothing's less likely or more.

Encounters of all sorts come to mind:  
Jutting corners, sudden jarring, lapsed  
Balance, broken falls. Fleetingly  
Remembered without feeling, no bodily past.

From the looks of the plum-purple centre  
Now of blues ringed by greenish yellow,  
Faded edging, washed out, shapeless stain,  
It's not recent. Must be a while ago.

There's something to be said – though not now –  
For slashing, cutting, injurious stealth.  
No doubt about exactly how, when, where.  
No one to blame but myself.)

### Unlicensed Literacy

Reading between the lines can be a way of life.  
Without knowing how, she's become an adept,  
Attendant on the unsaid, attuned to hints and stops.  
Expert appraiser of ceramic eyes,  
Wine-soured breath, souped-up speech,  
She laughs on cue at the joke meant just for her.  
Or agrees, nodding eagerly, when truths slam down  
With the jarring force of one six-pack too many.  
But sobriety isn't any proof of change.  
Though sealed with a smile, that hardening glare  
Needs watching, that abrupt arm  
Knocking over a glass as if by accident.  
Nonchalant, breezy questions may be loaded,  
Must be pondered, deftly dodged.  
Her stomach tightens, terse interpretation,  
When he shoves the cat off her chair as he walks by.  
Not a respected skill, hers, nor a trade to be plied,  
Deciphering for daily bread, art for inside.