

Chiromancy

When the dark spot surfaces at my palm's
heel I begin to read. No diagram accounts

for these: braided twigs. Burst intersections.
Snake prints etched into a desert. So much

purpose left unmade. A plan lands deep
in a hole. I must fold my thumb to see

my life at all. How long is a heart? In dreams
dark lines crack through any vision. By day

my trails equally confound; the lakewater
coruscates in prisms. I long to put hand

to skin. This news comes for me like the weight
of my gut, like the cold side of a tiny bed.

This fate line stretches past its shadow.
This path goes labyrinth straight.

Tasseography

For once I leave off the bags and measure out
a mouthful of leaves. They say to drink. Say
to swirl. I flip the cup and this is wrong. Begin
again. Shake a last mouthful. In the cup a swamp
in which I live. My leavings mouth a spire,

a spear. Holy terror. Devil's cross. Tea-
drunk I could find blessing or ballast. My God,
all the answers at industry in the ant bodies
tracing the dregs' spiral. My past has never
seemed so opaque, my future an absence

of space. I've never had so much in my mouth
to confess. I open the heart with a thumb
swipe clockwise, pray into the white breach.

Ornithomancy

I'm pulled from my bed by shadows
carving out the lawn in hungry
ellipses. I trace their desires
onto a page, baffling loops, fever
arrows, a distraction of lame
wing. I translate each warning

chek into escape. Today I am
the smallest predator. Today I stay
near the ground and live. We wait
for one shadow to consume
another, for a heap of ash to fall.

Ailuromancy

For a week I follow the cat. I forget
how to spell but write down its figures

on the carpet, in the bathtub, against
the wall. I follow him at night, stare

at the same ghosts in silent corners.
For an hour, we gaze under the oven

together. We assemble beggar ticks
in our coats. We pilot boxes and select

ambush. I question what the bottom
of a half-empty bowl speaks upward.

From what am I protected? CARVE.
DOG. BORE, he spells with loose
bones. At midnight, we begin to run.

Lepidopteromancy, 1909

You ask about our progress in codification. We've combed elevations from below sea level up past 6000 feet in our efforts. We've spoken to scientists and seers, from Boston to Borneo. No rock unturned, no ant hill unexcavated, no leaf unpalped to see if it flies.

Examination practice as yet focuses exclusively on behavior and description with occasional feeding habits as relevant. All lepidopterons have essential similarities on which we rely: forewings, hind wings, head, thorax, abdomen, posterior. We focus most on color, shape, and exceptional features to establish impressions. Flight patterns being so erratic, this information is comparatively useless in divination studies.

We prefer to find our specimens at large, but cultivation is possible. Ernst Kreidolf has suggested holding corrals, each food trough primed with favored delicacy. It is not necessary to separate the worms by more than inches, but we recommend more distance to avoid mixed signals and parasitism of intent. Rear your lepidopterons with passion exceeding your need for truth.

There is much to be said for the moth unbound by human wishes, the quivers of our own need. We do not approve the use of magnifying glasses. If your heart can't see it through your naked eye, you will never see it at all.