

Maureen Alsop

Onomancy

“divination by means of letters forming the name of a person”

The window is an evaporate. Maybe the long dress
of a woman inside a glass pane, a curl of steam, some
stigmata; the shape of a linnet’s throat. Your hand
is a constellation. Radiant through drapery, beetles

circle the beak of a weakened eyas. I have sometimes
found you hundreds of miles out to sea. Still the walkway
holds a fragrant banner, peonies scent each time I lean
over the bruised gravel. I might as well warn you that
I do not recognize the voice, half-inhuman, the single goose’s
hink-hawnk lifts upward through glass oaks, bitter stars
were sung. My guardian spars with the wooden boat

and speaks with her hands. Leak rot scribed into seven
rectangular letters: Maureen.

She asked which doorway, which controlled passage will you
keep? Which lit chamber
in the heart echoed orb clusters in the sky? There was not so
much I’d seen.

The portal’s silver center, a corridor, the angular sweep of her
dark hair plaited into a tanker’s reverberation, the waving of
goodbye. Invisibility does not recognize the dead; they are tactic.
The darkened window is a stem. Damp against my fingertips.

