

Eagle on Butterfly

For Kee thuan Chye

Still, you sit on the cool of the
marble floor where butterflies
hardly belong.
Black, and small as the nail
of my thumb,
but rising from the frozen
surf of the floor, like the
dorsal fin of a shark,
as if your real menace or
beauty of movement were
somewhere beneath the marble or surf—
white at midday, grey at twilight—
a hidden grace.
Your wings are frayed to the
teeth of a black comb;
and so, instead of floating or
weaving like a dark nib
writing its will upon the air,
you are shocked to stillness by
those wings, defeated from the
effort of flight or by elemental combat.
And yet, still, emblazoned like heroism
upon your wings, a white symbol:
the outstretched expanse of an
eagle tilted in flight,
caught on the tiny canvas of your wings,
clasped like the hands of a child in prayer,
as if you knew that you are more than
what you seem.

DAIZAL R. SAMAD