

California's Mistress
Julia Matthews

I coaxed my lady out
from between the conifer pillars of her temple
to see her dance
to touch the flickering fabric of her skirts
to warm myself

She blinked her glowing eyes
once, then twice
from the dim
and on crackling feet she stepped out to greet me

How could I have known
her hunger

She roared ravenous
took my pleading hands in hers and pulled me close
to waltz at last
among the litter and duff

Into my ear she hissed and purred
and we danced until I dripped
sweat from my brow
and flesh from my bones