

Two Poems by Marc Jaffee:

Blues in the Night

In my dream I could see the dreams
other people were having. It wasn't useful.

The streets are full of shields – gazes
are often misplaced, meant for someone else

in a different locale in a left-behind year.
I'd like to say something about your eyes –

something about the night, the city park full
of fences they put up to protect the lawns,

about clinging to your slightest provocation.
How the risks disappoint. I'd like to tell you

I love so many things – not just your laughter
or your collarbones, not just the unendurable.

Nobody wants to be told they're exactly
who they think they are. I'd like to become

a kind of cold-blooded charlatan, if only
to look at you without such intensity.

Frescoes at Noon

Trees with red berries. Little focused sun
like an eye squinting at me. Away from red,
I move toward blue. Paint on chapel walls,

many layers deep; a large wet hand points
downward. In the distance you can see
what used to be a man, this thin bony hull.

You can point to the spot where a pain stirs,
saying *here it hurts*. I put my finger to my temple
and pretend it is a handgun. Nothing is there,

not even a scab, not even a bruise. You can look
at the gory flesh and say, there we see the suffering

of Christ. But we do not. The pain is
bells and chants that echo through my skull.

I am walking toward the blue, so hot and wide.
I am walking into open air. The day is calm.