

**Open Cage  
for An Imaginary Bird**

A cage of fog envelopes us like songbirds,  
but our throats have all  
but gone mute: Each silent sigh arises  
like incense-- each, a smoke offering,  
streak of *chiaroscuro*  
anointing the night as if fallen feathers  
of imaginary beasts  
whose plumes we stumble upon when  
not even looking. These steel grates  
of vapor dissolve--

*Our amazement has flung them wide open...*

-- Fantastic fauna,  
culled from ancient bestiaries,  
now freed in mid-air like dust known only  
to withered monks & the Dead...

.. *Scrim & smoke-screen lifted*, as if to rent open  
what was so well-hidden for years--

*Frail, scattered quills*  
*dissolving into a transfigured night*  
*where they leave no footprint, emblem nor trace...*

... & so--*What remains*, with our awe?--

Fleeting veils, those smoky gifts whose  
ancient Source we've yet to decipher--  
*no code for its language, known-sound of its voice.*