

**When Tigers Smoked**  
**By Gregory JM Kasunich**

Back when tigers smoked  
and the willows wandered at will

You bore an ancient river into  
This world, my world  
My heart, this heart

You invited me to swim in your waters  
To taste your sweet/sour fruit  
And dance naked upon the shore  
Of your exhaustive expanse

Back before the mountains had names  
And the leviathans slumbered endless

you coughed into my mouth "Here be dragons"  
And my soul shuddered saintly  
for the sky was falling around us  
Igniting the black liturgy of my yearning

Back when the purloined fire remained  
Affixed upon Olympus, secure and taunting

You shivered inside your new suit  
A feline smile spreading like linen  
Across your lunar face  
A drop of blood in the cream

But in my furtive shyness, I demured  
And the chambers were emptied  
The refectory dismantled  
The heath laid ashen and bare and cold

I gasped - knowing that  
This will all be over soon  
And our faces will never be dark  
And our pockets will never empty

How I wish those tigers still smoked  
And those sleeping mountains remained nameless  
And that stolen fire still just out of reach

For then our time would be spent  
discovering the terrain of each other  
And not drifting towards the distant shores  
of now, of now, of now, of now, of now