

At the Convent

It was the music that was important
in the dark afternoons
music that glistened on the vaulted ceiling
music that ran under carved notes

G A B C

pedal sostenuto
where is your Debussy
think about water
think about your hands
long sounds
long windows taller than I
panes I pressed
my hands against when I wanted them to
seem
like Sister's
brown and banded by muscle
she left
for a calling in LA before
by debut was Brahms
I played one night
three hours
there was cake
think about next year
think about your hands
but the music ebbs and seeps through the
floorboards
and my fingers cannot hold it
I kneel
with my face to the cracks and coax
the music from the wood
press to the floor my fingernails
white

—Karen Kao