

smoldering beauty (mount sakurajima, japan)

Alison Pryer

she is skinned alive
by her own hemorrhaging
fires

and glows
like a raku kiln
at night

she knows no shame
wears a girl's kimono
of orange silk shot with pink

she dances too passionately
for one of her age
a fury of gas and rock

at dawn she powders
her molten wounds
with dustings of ash

and brushes her three
ink-dark breasts
against the paper sky

incarnated as steel-blue goddess
of the floating world
she reigns over clouds and waves

and performs
her mysterious choreography
daily

to the numinous pulse
a taiko throbbing
of her earthen body