

East Asian Studies

There was always an attraction,
a fascination with fascination.

I shared the experts' curiosity,
perceived my likely falsity.

Their libraries put me at ease.
They treated me like me.

I did flash cards until I was dizzy,
sought out ancestral history

with intent to be the subject
of narratives not yet written. Object,

too. I didn't mean to linger,
but it's a long endeavor,

Chinese literacy.
I neglected English poetry,

or so it looks on my transcript.
In fact, the tension was delicious,

two structures in every sentence,
an elsewhere to every presence,

the touch of estrangement
bracing, in both departments.

Had I been more scholarly,
I would have found family.

Thriving on collision,
I did not become a citizen.