

To the Folksinger Just Arrived

by Justin Hamm

Whisper salutations to your irises
and tie those strange ornaments
into your hair. Crawl from your
Volkswagen into the sweltering city
and pluck something evangelical
from your book of songs. Strum
your dulcimer and enunciate as if
to blow life back into fried chicken
or restore the red to petrified roses.
Give them mystery, ancestry.
Give them not too much skin.
Yours, never forget, is the music
of freight trains and holyghosts.
You need only the lungs to drown
out the daily discord, the ambulances,
the ring tones and the burglar alarms,
and the city will place its heart
on the steaming asphalt and ascend.

