

The Lives of Others

Nothing is only itself:

in each brick, a story
of mud, grass, and sun,
in each tree, a story
reaching back to its roots.

The seed of the avocado
carries out to the world
what its leaves have taken in,

a young girl hides a coin
in the oleander, saying aloud
her wish, her prayer, her incantation
of rage.

Note the curved flute of the calla lily—
how it rings the flower's center
like the scar around the sightless eye
of Jean de Dieu

who each morning brings
coffee, milk, and two
hard-boiled eggs.

Murakoze, I say—
to the flower, to the man,
to the milk and eggs.

Murakoze to the brick
and tree and buttery fruit.

Murakoze to the girl
bent over the bush's begging hands.

But I mean to say more.
I mean to say this:
each story holds a question
that is more than itself.
And each story is its answer.

What, then, can I do but listen?