

THE TREACHERY OF IMAGES

Ceci n'est pas une pipe,
this is not a pipe, Magritte wrote
beneath my pipe-shaped curves,
beaming, pleased with himself,
his playful ploy, his wit,
coyly deploying me as decoy,
a dupe, a painted replica,
a pipe no one could smoke,
Magritte, joyful, heedless,
a thirty-year-old boy,
and me, newborn, helpless,
a patch of oil on canvas,
suspended, unsuspecting,
not knowing the sequel,
how people would stare,
giggle, chuckle, cackle,
snicker, snort, sneer
at me, at me, at me,
accepting or rejecting
Magritte's statement
as if it were his to make,
as if truth were simple,
binary, yes/no, either/or,
as if I had no say
in who I am.

— Mary Soon Lee

