

A Memory for Lena

Jenny Crakes

Once we were birds who soared to every window.
When dusk comes, she asks me for a memory I keep.
I slip them into her hands, one by one.

In the shadows of the moon
A lady smiles and sings to us
The night wind is fresh and the snow is crisp
As our footsteps crunch and crackle towards the lake

Summer days, a haze of harsh light
Waves crash to shining crystals
And we spin with arms outstretched
On the moist, glassy shore where colors swirl
Like paints on a palette

The train shakes in rhythm
Wheels rattle, sending echoes
Through my body
Carrying me away to a peaceful place

For we are still swallows, our soft beating wings
Poised for flight.

Food, Shelter, Gas

Taylor Davis

Cars pass, lighting up night with their unearthly gems of a string strung from the beginning of US-93 until the desert valley ends. This necklace lays heavy on strange empty spaces that call themselves towns, towns with luminescent signs that stretch towards traveler's solitude speaking FOOD SHELTER GAS. In the morning dust covers thick the lenses of an individual's binding land life perception. Barely discernible is the cerulean that drips from the sky, stronger out of reach like spaces, portals to a life lived in full color.

I've been wondering when the tint of the sky will darken, harden, break and fall. After I hide, as it comes, like sheets of glass, roaring down to the ground, I will collect the most sharp piece of sapphire and cut through this world of silicone packs of gum, magazines and beef jerky. Tumultuous truck stop bleach smell and exhaust will break way like heavy winds to what is the beauty of where you are going, sea air.

I feel stale. I have been known only as a resource without a name. I spoke with a man

who asked me with his eyes to draw the edges of my long red nails down the hardened dough of his back. He traded me change for cigarettes, and in the world of electricity that haunted our small talk, I said no, with the cloth of the corners of my outline clinging, folding and unfolding, dissolving into ubiquitous angry energy. The man left. Revived himself and left. I feel divined by sight, eaten up by eyes, mirrors, reflection and photographs. In these times, I would like to dissolve the silicone that illuminates not just this store, but me as well, expose the fleshen monster that is capable of being, getting, like him.

I am a particle of sex and smoke and green fabric that covers my waist, ties behind my neck. Stacks of items, stacks of selling. I work here as the land dissolves beneath my feet. I am a molecule of molten blood. I am growing to hot for the earth to remain still. There are pulses now, growing louder. They are in time with my heart. When I climb through the moments I open up with sky and my fingers, I will emerge a machine without its parts. I will be a message, a mouth turned outwards.



Photo by Julia Kramer