

Crown for Forgetting

I

Here is your beloved New Mexico
with its skinny-ass cows, hip bones juttet.
The car windows, filmed with smoke. Sun-flooded
worn leather. A shaggy herd of buffalo

nosing the earth. Tally my wounds, ammo
against memory of us, as you disrupt
my first journey here alone. Trust
I can't forget. Scabbed over. Hello,

forgiveness, fleeting as the moon in cloud.
I pick until they bleed, dead stars once more,
fresh and welcome red of you. I order

another beer. I order a crowded
new heart and fresh figs from a discount store
where the road narrows at this, the border.

II

The road narrows; this is the border. Here
is the highway north to the silt city
where we lived, our pink house with its pretty
punched windows. Many seasons of moth. Here

I could chart a path to you, trace the years
of my eyes, mouth, clit. No. I wipe the grit
from the map. I've marked your X, graffiti
to remember. I will your face to disappear

in the fullness of time. Sagebrush belongs
to the species Artemisia—it is
silver and toothed. It sounds like slaughter, moon,

huntress. Like rain, forgetting. Like song.
My new heart and I drive west instead, as
a thunderstorm darkens sage-heavy June.

III

Sage-heavy, darkling thunder, this storm
my open mouth. Roadside, I watch fire
tongue the mesa, smoothing the lips of a stung
face. A narrow snake to Taos: swarms

of tourists, but I am off-season, worn
to a thread by the heat. Naked among
the piñons, I dig a grave skin-deep, young
roots splitting as I bury your ring, formed

to my finger by time. No matter how
pleasing the purple mesa, no matter
how magnetic your call, or how rubbed

raw my will. After fire, sagebrush will not grow
back. This rain and bright wind will scatter
me, far. I won't root in you again.

IV

Rootless again, lust like desert heat,
I turn, shade-laden, to eye *windoms*
in the wall the pretty docent says, *see?* True
adobe. *If only we could learn what's inside*

humans as quickly. Sly wink, her hand on my arm.
At the hotel we drink wine bottle-straight,
lips stained purple, her skin smooth as pink. Praise
this new tongue, sweet salt and unfamiliar scent.

It feels so good to be so far from you.
To be so good so far to tongue
her salt unfamiliar

purple stain on skin a praise we
wine our lips wink her hand on my
what's inside *quickly* sly
if only the pretty docent says

truth *opens* *the wall*
eyes shade-laden
lust turns desert
rootless and far again

V

Far I root again
in this rain bright will scattering
raw my fire

how magnetic call
pleasing purple no matter

to my finger time no matter

roots bury your form
piñon dig skin-deep young
thread heat naked among
tourists but I am worn

face narrow snake to
the mesa smooth lip of
my heavy fire
dark mouth this storm

VI

Thunder darkens heavy June,
new heart I drive instead as
huntress forgetting songs

silver tooth sounds like slaughter
moon to Artemisia—
full of time sage belongs

to remember will your face disappear?
the map I've marked your graffiti
on my eyes mouth no the grit
could chart a path trace years

of punched windows seasons of
here our pink with pretty
highway city slit here
the narrow border road

VII

The road narrows at the border
new heart fresh figs on discount
another crowded beer

fresh & welcome red I order
stars forgiveness dead once
until fleet of moon clouds

that I forget Over? Hello?
my first journey alone—trust
here memory nosing the earth
I tally my wound worn leather

shaggy buffalo filmed with sun
smoke-flooded skinny
cows hip bones beloved
Here is New