

Transient Songs



by Amber Gayle



Your back is like a highway
I drove too many times I
am shocked by these speed bumps
everytime
brother stand
up straight
don't let your spine crumble
into itself
implode your
emotions your
nightmares.

Sweet you are
like I never touch
but your back is a map
of tensions
your jaw is tight with fear
and my hands
are sterile like
houseplants caged
in my flesh
I am only decoration with
five fingered flowers blooming
hopeless passion.

Seattle, Washington
August 1992



Snufkin, my idol,
 rose resurrected from a book I
 found
 myself old paper library shelf rainy
 sorting afternoon carefully
 eyes roved over colored spines like
 volumes of beings I might
 become like noses
 in boxes stacked up finite vast on
 a shelf taller than me.
 Snufkin played songs on his
 harmonica,
 pulled out his tent to pitch,
 pulled always
 his hat down over his eyes,
 pulled always
 prohibitive signs off walls and trees
 tacked.
 His hands were paws and just the
 gap between his boot heel and
 the ground is something
 I would give my details up for,
 standing in ballet class looking
 in the mirror
 caught a glimpse of it;
 the room fades from view and the
 movements are incidental,
 busy work,
 when I have found

what I need and my heart says,
 "walk out the door here this
 minute and just
 hitchhike to Canada," immersed in
 blissful tears celebrating high
 that space, that shape,
 that juncture of black and light
 punctures
 my reserve and the slippery grip
 I had on
 classes.
 Snufkin sang songs to wake the
 spring and I
 write poems
 in silence hear the river filtered
 through the volume of
 my eyes.
 Closeness is;
 I am Snufkin, I have given my life
 to the enactment
 of a story I read first when I was
 not a decade old,
 and that
 is poetry.

Intimacy binds pleasant, perhaps,
 for a season but
 last night in the arms of the woman
 I love I thought

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