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Escalator

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ESCALATOR

ANDREW VIGESAA

“A fool, a fool! I met a fool i’ the forest,
A motley fool; a miserable world!”
— *As You Like It*, Act II, Scene VII

Moon men:
we’re all down here stealing
Christmas and then giving it back,
tying our laces together
and throwing ourselves at powerlines.

I had a thought;
in a diner I’m looking at a man who looks through me,
and he only exists
if I let him. He’s not here;
he’s wherever he is,
and everywhere
if the right channel’s on.

There aren’t any people here either.
Works-For-Tips smiles through
shade and smoke-break-breath under peppermint
to scrape my jar for something sweet,
something I don’t need.
She doesn’t need.

For your consideration:
A puppet, a pirate and a prophet walk into a whale.
You’ve heard this one already?
Well, the punchline’s about a wooden leg.
Everyone’s seen and heard everything.
We’ve shot all the messengers.

Exhibit B:

Turn the crank on the box.
 Just slightly, slow...
 Not too fast because if—
 POP!
 goes the weasel.
 I'm either laughing or crying, I forgot
 to remember which. It's only fun
 the first time.

“Rule of Three”

I was in the elevator
 and the muzak played a marching beat
 to knock the colors onto the floor.
 They dripped down to a lagoon
 floating with yesterday's headlines.

The squinters and hunchers have their theories,
 “Dependence Day changed it all,” they cry—
 Whether it's the trap or the branch
 a dead rabbit puts meat on the bones,
 bugs in the webs, dogs by the fence.
 I have my own thoughts:

We're moon men,
 we're always going to be.
 At least until we're not.
 How does it go?
 Nothing gold can stay
 and what's spoiled will still rot

while a spool
 sits idle and bare,
 at the bottom of a well
 gulping green water.
 When we wash the thread,
 a black ink drips from the strands,
 wringing the fur of some horror long since extinct.

What do we do with the ink?
 Can we drink it?
 Can we smoke it?

Can we sell it?

Here's a thought:

Break those brittle white branches clutching your thumper,
 nestled snug between black lead balloons.

Carve out a little spot in the center.

Now, what's one more hole in the head?

Pour it in with a funnel,
 and shake liberally.

Someone left the lights on while we were on vacation.

And somebody is going to have to answer for their mistakes.

And maybe this whole mess is an heirloom.

Can we pawn it?

Oh—

They tried already?

So now we're isotopes and submarines

we've got our helmets on

for outerspace or headspace

or innerspace,

inner peace?

My library is full of books I won't open.

I have friends whose voices won't ever speak to me.

I've got a kiss on the mantle I should keep in storage.

There's a moon crashing into an ocean out there,
 ripping up the wake and thrashing it into beaches and port towns,
 into the nowhere that is burning down.

That nowhere

From where we all

watch.

From where the man who is everywhere and nowhere

Stands with a microphone to speak to me

in some diner

wherever I am.

Wherever you are.

We are an escalator.

We move without moving.