

Fall 1987

## Beauty is the Sun's Daughter

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## *Beauty is the Sun's Daughter*

Thirty-one days of October and the opalescent monsoons  
roll over like God's gray eggs, viscous, pooling earth to clay,  
filling the grass with oily skinks and pink-mouthed alligators.

I lie in bed near noon and do not rise  
but turn over and over in sweaty sheets  
behind the bamboo curtains.

Outside the window a loquat fattens and on its branches  
a mockingbird creeks and clinks *rain, rain*,  
his warble like the lip-blown crystal of a chandelier.

Thirty-one days of rain like making love again,  
again with no release. This is no season,  
mushed together and sticky as gumbo.

The mourning doves try to form themselves  
from the dun-colored leaves, and I, from a pattern  
of mire and bruise, recall only two visions.

One—a painter's studio drips with witches  
bathing in green. Circe hangs in each room,  
naked and wrapped with vegetation.

Rubens might have painted her blue  
amongst the porcine suitors, lumpy  
and sweet as sherbet, let the waterlilies

bloom yellow. Or she could have floated  
the Bogue Falaya with purple muscadine,  
and fleshy bougainvillea.

But the swamp artist, old sot, sick  
of the rain, the clammy garret  
of his brain, shrinks his goddess

and chokes her with green, lets  
her rot in the sugar cane  
and soft mud. For days I amble

about in my body, dilapidated, loose-skinned  
as a beagle until finally on the last Friday,  
sneezing under a ligustrum canopy,

I see Circe herself come splashing  
through the parking lot in a red convertible,  
her unplaited, razor-cut hair flapping.

Another month and I might have noted  
her flashy clothes and underbitten chin,  
the irritating habit she has of licking

her knuckles, but I welcome her now  
in every muscle as if, young coed  
racing through diffused sun, she has the charm

to soothe the rain, to turn us human again.  
Such is beauty—blood stopper, burn healer,  
enchanter of warts. As she cuts around the corner,

her waxy car brushes against me; afterwards  
there is the perfume of cucumbers and rock music  
breaks like bagpipes against the saturated leaves.

*Sandra Alcosser*