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Reno to Wendover

Gerri Jardine

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Gerri Jardine

Reno to Wendover

I am in a motel room in Reno.
I am taking it apart.
I have some tools but the motel is very sticky.
Plaster drops from the ceiling in wet clumps.
Outside the Truckee River is dried up.
I build a bridge next to it out of old plaster
and pieces of the motel.
From the top span I can see the curve of the earth
and on it a town made of yellowed newspapers.
Along the highway messages are written with stones.
A watertower retreats across the horizon.
Not even the rev of the motorcycle changes.
The casino is full of children,
shoulders bent to slot machines that pay
in marbles. Blackjack tables are abandoned,
the giftshop emptied of bibles and brothel guides.
In the chapel the last couple drowns in rice.
It spills out the door and sticks to my shoes.
On the salt flats I tip over.
The motorcycle spins on the throttle and pegs,
digs a hole and runs out of gas.
My new claim yields marbles, a rosary, and rice.
I wear a towel and display my hands.