

Winter 2006

from Hovenweep

Elizabeth Robinson

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from Hovenweep

ix.

Someone sits cross-legged before three piles. Tallow, flint, and a mound of unknown material. She twists cotton wicks in her hands.

Elsewhere: she digs recklessly, throwing up dirt in what was, archeologically, a garden. There is a fossil hand grasping a fossil shovel. All this becomes evident in the aftermath of flames and wind. She invokes play

and the mortar falls into heaps. The careful ruins of fruit. The tentative petrification of herbs. Overripe by millenia, the place smells of shit.

Someone will come along and counter the smell with another finding. Buried communities are not concerned about weather's vicissitudes. The cistern dries out into a primitive lantern. She digs not to unearth herself, but to absorb light from the detritus. She clenches her tail with a set of facsimile teeth.

x.

Now where will I go, as I have completed the task put before me and am tempted to sob from frustration.

It is probable

thousands of people have put their feet in these same tracks, have been swaddled with fat, and shuddered. What appears to be an endless plain is really rent by deep, narrow canyons

that run southwest toward

some more than a thousand

feet deep

Seeps,

what you suck from, for nourishment, at the trick of the source. In just such a way as to make the narrowest mesa an errand from which to fall. Falling is part of the comic mask. The gibberish I've recited. Something dark and blue trickled from my mouth while a crippled man literally walked on air above the lines recited. The lines:

One of them is called Cutthroat Ruin. The other admits nothing through a fantasized gate.