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AND THERE WERE CUL-DE-SACS AS FAR AS THE EYE COULD SEE

Brendan Jordan

Beyond Limon, Colorado, there's a field I waited for.
It grew emerald in the velvet of April's first
reluctant skies: the August startled me, burnt gold like
a mudflat and waving curious sea, spitting up
seedpods instead of foam,
and in Arizona, which I do not remember, but for hotel
balconies pierced by the glow of exit-ramp LED,
separated from the sandstone spires
that circle wordlessly in a purple dusk beyond the city—
when we stare out at them, leaning jittery elbows
on railings too tall, the nighttime fell like a curtain
and the television called, an overworked father,
to lull us with stolen images of colorful birds
that somewhere traverse floodplains, a carpet of wings rolling up
into the dusty storage bin of extinction.
When the waves take us,
our graffiti can scream fuck you in neon,
rage with stylized Marxian fists painted neon
green, and still the bricks of the alley
will admit graciously the ocean to devour them.
The rail platforms will be empty, dismembered knots
of wire flicking blue sparks as the metal antennae
of abandoned traincars wave uselessly in the gale;
and somethings will be left,
orange sunhats dropped like spare change into gutters
and beloved how-to manuals left fluttering, broken insects
sitting baffled on iron tables in deserted plazas.
Someone will tell you, "I told you so."
Someone will pray beside a man who counts the last

dollars he could pilfer from the bashed-in ATM,
and folds them up again, stuffing the once-current-
cy under the leather tongues of chapped boots.
Meanwhile, trucks loaded not full enough with plastic jugs
of purified water roll into trembling neighborhoods
and woolen blankets rain from helicopters like odd manna
falling in trampled lawns:

We were all born here,
the suburban cloister where brick-walled
shopping malls rise like steeples, lifting the holy
beacons of neon logos, interchangeable halos
tossed like discus out of heaven.

Our children prefer to chop the pixelated arms off zombies
with their y-button chainsaws they won in the last
level—there was a time we preferred
that they stole the magnifying glass from the puritanical studies
of serious fathers, and trotted out to the yard
to blast the blueish armor of beetles till they burst
into puffs of Fourth of July smoke. This
has always been the flag they pledged too,
why eighteen-year-olds who fret about acne
and store gin in their winter boots make better
soldiers, who see the desert through the red filter of a scope
and come home with swelled arms and trigger fingers
for kisses. They taste white phosphorous in the shredded wheat
and drum rhythms like a rain of debris against the countertop.