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Beauty is the Sun's Daughter

Sandra Alcosser
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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.

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