

A.J. Huffman

Corner of Arsenic and Absinthe

Two killers from the same [gender?] sect stop to reflect for a moment. A meeting of mirrored minds begins (as all stories do) with *once upon a time*. Tendrils of happiness ripple through pools of forbidden liquid, cracked without ice. Shaken, not stirred, to address the focus, now blurred by the matching trails of smiles blowing inside poison's mites. Hurricane and blizzard combine, compare notes. Resolve that their sums' fuel equals one solitary word: *regret*.

I Am The World['s Oyster]

The trees in this desert are full of fire. Burst

by a whisper, they blame my lack of skin for their demise – foretold by the cracks of my palms.

I carved a river (of the required red) to feed them.

Refused was the echoed wind's reply.

Digression rose to shape me a new skyline. I stumble around the three feet of clouds left to wear me as their cloak. (Sadly, synergism was never a good look for me.)

Finally, collision's coercion conquers true transgression. I re-emerge a dusty egg worthy of a Dali-ed stroke, and followed the rhinoceros to the inlet . . .

I am sure I will be able to conceptualize a door for you to show.

Hanging [the] Garden

of babbling numbers, like veined ivy clinging. . .

Memories' walls are smothering. Listen to the trees. They divide more than the whispering. Willows wait for an answer: *incalculable* without the digital streams, our fingers would be bleeding blooms useless as flowers. We are building

[our own ruin].

No wonder.