

Deborah Saltman

Morning in the Prim

With one eye still closed to the world
She rights herself
Express still visible
On the upside of her cardboard futon
Stretching out her blackened digits
Into the recycling bags
That are her wet weather shoes
She takes out her toothbrush
And toothpaste
And cleans her teeth

My landlord opens his bookstore
Stale book breath meets
Sour urine, wet dog and burning coffee
It is time for dashboards of fluffy pink dice
To pull up
For the arguing twins and anxious small dogs
Leashed to parents, nannies and grandparents
To parade along the pavements

She gathers her rainbow of recycling
Rises to the right angle that is now her upright
Feels up a few more bags
And disappears into her night

The Ballad of the Illustrated Ladies

She has those fading black serial numbers
Peeking out like a line of ants after the rains
From under the starched men's shirt cuff
Curling twice around her narrow female wrist
Stale aftershave smells of the husband who left it
Clash with the newly risen yeast

She is old but so am I
She grabs the last baguette from my hand
So sure that my survivor guilt
Will let this last loaf
Make its way into her bag

Why are there no white tattoos?

In our art gallery meetup
My internet date
Shows me her tattoos
The peahens preen
From the soft pad of her thighs
Women epaulette her shoulders
She hopes I don't mind
That they are no match
For the El Greco miniatures

That nite the illustrated woman
Comes to me
But the women dancing on her shoulders
Are as alien to me
As the numbers on the bread lady
In the morning the deep welts of lust
Bleed like fresh tattoos

Only scars left out in the sun
Make white tattoos

Selena

Selena

Your ground floor

Is a potpourri of your perfumes

Caressing the tendrils of my trunk

Hitching a ride on the nerve of my nose

Resting on the buyers' page of my brain

Your next floor

Commands the three nerves that control my vision

Swirling my eyeballs around

Your dazzling white sheets

Seducing my pocketbook to open

Your café

Pulls my lips, my mouth, my tongue to yours

Conjugating the five nerves of my face

Selena your coffee brews deep inside

In the carpark farewell

The last two nerves

Make my shoulders raise

To the climax of my purchases

We are over

The nerve of control

Finally slows my guilty heart

And you are alone again