

Amie Sharp

SPIDER REMEMBERS

The catmint shrub with its furred blue spikes, my shade in the panting summer heat. The white tendrils I'd place, silk methods perfected by my ancestors. Everyday sun in the soft globes of my eyes as I waited for the fly. Its jerks of struggle, its rattling breath I sensed in pleasure. And always a deeper hunger radiating into my belly. Survive, and then create. I'd spotted the human, but how could I know the thing would make for the very blooms I lived in? Cutting into the stems and bringing me along with a slash before I could drop to mulch or launch into the bush's dense core. The sunrays whirling a kaleidoscope in the octave of my pupils. Then water harder than pelting rain, ripping my legs from the leaves and spiraling me into a maw. A sinking through metal funnels into endless caves. There's no light now, here where my pincers still snatch at any smaller creature skittering in the dark.

PROCESSIONAL

The spattering of hail sounds the soft places on the roof.
In sunlight, a chipped jar. This painted sunflower juts
off the canvas; on the screen the frozen king

raises his arms and conjures a new army of the dead.
In the moment before a daylily opens the hushed air gleams.
A lion follows the child on the other side of the glass with his eyes.

I clamber the last rock spire to see the mountains settle
under mid-morning clouds, but after dusk, a woman
walks her dog under streetlights that will shine

even until morning. The forklift operator knows
the rumble of each gear, which frequency it rides,
and the water fountain clinks the shrills of traffic

and playing children. My grandfather cracked open
the door swollen to the jamb with spring humidity.
After rain, the smell of a meadow hangs full

in the rainbow air. How can the man who mutters
to the poster on the brick building stand
in the soup line at precisely the same moment

every day? Start at the edge of the garden bed
and note the way earth-grains tumble under the trowel;
a woman's face lies half in shadow.

We would love to discover something written
on the faded paper sticking out of the book,
but it was only ever marking a page.

ASTRONOMY

Once the albatross collided
with the sparrow above the dairy.

And above that, crushed rainbow
powder. Suddenly the fire coal

horizon unlocked, the black hole
in the center of our galaxy

revving its celestial spider embrace.
A meteor flaming purple over skyscrapers

purring in their loneliness. And always,
your eyes flickering upward and down

across the words, a nexus of color
and cosmos, then the slow fade.