

Juliana M Sartor

Abasuerus

As women, we say
in the days of, in ruling, in reigning, of reins
in those days, vaulted, extended, pressing
upward in tower and situation
of stone.

The place of the east, a land skewed into time and division,
nominalizing the rising throat of view.

In this place we arrange for presentation. A full invitation. A round gathering, the opening of arms.
The arming, a sense of breath, the nobility. Taking the point of a series of months and display.

It becomes congruous to bear witness and gifting,
noisy with amorous movement.

Rounding up into full feasting, garden brush, a known tower. The breath of kings.
The pull of clean curtains, fastened hangings, stretched to violet. A precious architecture, mosaic of gold,

where, with a gathering of anointed gardens we swallow
to witness the pill of cloth, the fineness of applause, a swift violet
quieted into pourable wine, into an elevation.

Wrists golden on the pavement.

Esther Chosen Queen

Beneath a careful eye,

the watch of months, the year of spice
and wine, oiled perfume in mouths,

a place of risen walls, a palace to pull into desire, a king and a crop of skin.

What woman does a man covet? Her name
low on his voice, summoned, the quiet of chords.

A woman of the eyes, between palms and the rounding arms,

with a crown to choose the greatest spectacle.

The tax of lust, a lowering,
another spread of heat and feast. Dim the din of metal
and mouths, holding a golden glow in the honor of a turn,
the whispering eye.

Walking downtown without snow.

To muster some more quiet light of completion, there is not a moment but a tension, to put an origin on end or know the split of voices, the glow of chemical synthesis; the standing up of buildings. Your face against trains alternates the time of intonation, morse code of a voice at auction, a fold of summer steel. A sentence of ringing against it. The voice of the owl in sun. The origin as an urge of a closing or the color of a closed throat, of lungs launched against a hillside. To rake quietly in the light of a mile or morning, heat and a heightening, a ripping back. Exposure and posture. Ringed ribs of a spine. Wires dragged to some shore we thought distant, a gut along something monumental or just a moment of your movement. To go north and stay north. A series of musculature or verbs strung; a sigh and some grasping. An owl in a wood with its wingspan.

The Kid with the Spanish Accent.

The kid with the Spanish accent started reading. It was his turn. I didn't know if I felt sorry for his voice or what. It was like he was reading his own biography.

The kid with the Spanish accent started making toast. He always checked the toaster dial when we walked into the kitchenette. Also, what else was there to eat. I watched him because my sister had told me that people will steal your laundry. Not him, but someone.

The kid with the Spanish accent waited at the crosswalk. It was winter. Four crows lit onto chainlink beside him.

The kid with the Spanish accent saw my eyes. I felt embarrassed. He was easily exoticized. He came into the store behind me. Or, after me, by a few minutes. He was buying super glue to hold his shoe together.

The kid with the Spanish accent stood at the bus stop. He had yellow headphones. There was something about the cloud in the west that day, or the sunset. Maybe it had to do with heat or something.

The kid with the Spanish accent had three pencils. He lent one out for a multiple choice test. I knew he would never get it back. No one cares about the pencils they borrow. I almost stopped to remind the kid but I just kept walking.

The kid with the Spanish accent knew how to braid. I thought this is funny in an appreciative way. I have brothers. At dinner, one of them would fall out of his chair on purpose and we'd all always laugh.

The kid with the Spanish accent got his driver's license. He must've been older than me. I saw him in the parking lot in a green Cavalier. Most people, at some point, drive a Cavalier.

The kid with the Spanish accent started wearing cologne. I felt embarrassed for noticing. It smelled like a house. I started wearing deodorant at 7, when my best friend told me she did. She said she did because she thought I did. Maybe I put on my dad's once.

The kid with the Spanish accent started throwing up. The carpeting. I whispered, "It could happen to anyone." This is what scared me.

The kid with the Spanish accent high-fived another kid under a basketball hoop. I felt compelled earlier to keep quiet. Someone asked me what was wrong. Maybe this was all I wanted.