

July Submission To Sixfold

Blue

We carefully hung drywall over the crevice in the hallway, covered the fake oak laminate with a dirty drop cloth, put a coat of *Dutchboy* cobalt blue over the glaring white surface, opened tall bottles of rust-colored ale, from our pack, sat watching the paint dry.

There was little to say, the white noise generator, set on high would have drowned it out anyhow. No window, a bare bulb hanging off a cord was the light. Blue paint, streaked in places dried unevenly. We cursed, unable to be heard over the *whoooooosh* of the machine,

rolled, brushed, slapped one more blue coat on the new wall, left the noise running full blast, walked out the door, smoking on our way through the checkpoint, exhaled deeply when the iron gate closed behind us.

Remember

The art faculty exhibit was an illusion.
We ordered coffee in the cavernous cafe
next to the museum at the U. Five customers
on a sunny afternoon, three laptops open,

all with illuminated fruit logo. Girl
along the aisle seemed intent on writing her
novel, couple along the wall maybe comparing
images of ancient sculpture, well,

it *was* the art museum.

Tomorrow morning you would fly to Iberia, first
to Barcelona, then by bus to Andorra la Vella.
You'd be gone 'til Fall, it would not be easy for us.
Traffic there is worse than Istanbul you said,

not a place to drive

Wanting to give you something of me, something
to take along, a reminder of us. My *Maxfli Tour*,
the lucky hole-in-one ball was in my pocket.
I pressed it into your hand, you
were gracious, accepting, touched,

it seemed.

Our friend Frieda was at the airport the morning
you left. You two spoke for a moment, coffee
in the concourse, had a laugh. She saw you off,
you turned, waved, tossed a tissue, something
white, toward a dumpster.

It clanked.

Shampoo Jingles and Old Country Songs

Weeding roses, mind in deep neutral,
Luster Crème Shampoo floated by.
More than the name, the whole jingle,
Dream Girl, Dream Girl, Beautiful
Luster Crème Girl, I sang it softly,
wondering where that came from,
dug some chickweed out, then
from a west Texas juke box came
Hank Snow, *I Don't Hurt Anymore*.
No use to deny, I wanted to cry,
the day you said we were through,
pretty much the whole verse.
I jabbed at the dirt, reached
for a dandelion behind the rose bush.
Caught a thorn in my arm, no more
songs, no more jingles, a little blood,
some soft cursing, *Miller Time*.

Instructions

Take a deep breath of air at dawn
when the smoke has cleared.

Tell me how fast the river flows in October,
whether the Blue Heron will eat the koi.

Sit at the edge of the sea, wait for answers
to wash in with the tide.
When the Dungeness crab all clamber
from the surf, think what follows them.

When the Dungeness crab all clamber
from the surf, think what follows them.

Decant the red wine, let it mellow a bit
‘til sundown.

Be certain to warn the goldfinch
when the hawk is in the tree.

Let the patina dim the sheen
on the copper bowl.

When the moon rises over the hill, dance
in its cold light.

Lie here with me ‘til the sun is high.

Minor Changes

She loved me like a jazz tune.

An intro

nervous hellos

sidelong glances

a clasp of hands

kisses at midnight

leading

to the verse,

champagne

shared apartment steamy

showers

kisses

at dawn then

a bridge,

change of key

staccato trumpet

brushes

on skins

another verse

art house movies

dinner parties

too many people

laughing too loud

holidays on skis

the end was coming

weather changed

tempo slowed

empty glasses

messy tables

silent stares

music fades

a minor chord

