

Traveling

I. I Am Going Away

Just for a little while. Things will have shifted in me in home in everyone by the time i get back.

Displacing myself -

an ant traveling boundless expanses to a new square of the quilt, satisfied with discovery.

No longer available, close, sharing the same sky as those i've left behind.

Suddenly i am strange – i'm me, but with gone-ness affixed to me (surprise worry or jealousy may come with it but they do not stick)

It will be there later, even when i get back. I'm no longer gone, but i have been. Imprinted with the dust and pain and brightness and movement of somewhere else.

I've left some of me behind

but i left some of me home, too, and that's what draws me back

to sleep within my own old walls – the brick ones as well as the ones i built,

the familiar shortcomings just a bit too high for climbing but full of windows showing me the greener grass (and stretching highways) on the other side.

Blank cities just far enough away to look perfect.

II. Nebraska Was Fascination

For me, it was.

Rolling through horizons with nothing beyond them but flatness -
nothing to inform us but road signs.

Each struggled along with our own version of sleep-snatching, like flicking through nameless channels to new scenery (and a lighter sky with a higher sun).

All along that hard dry river of highway we were crossing unmarked boundaries. All this flatness broken up into squares, each branded with ownership -

some entity or some someone has these lands on a list.

Every square (with its unique telephone poles and wind turbines and prairie dog tunnels) belongs on an agenda, has its own statistics or construction plans or soil acidity - each has its trespassers (deranged) and buried treasure (unlikely) and beauty (stiff).

Even the useful ones, those squares full of fruit-bearing stalks that bristle majestically. But even though the land bowed to us so that we could crush it down on our way -

even if we eat the bread from the grains of those sun-blached plains we traveled -

we will remember nothing except the erratic glimpses of blank flatness on this round rolling earth.

III. Mounain Outcasts

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Why

is it that

i feel so far

Removed from all

these mountains & all the

people traipsing about on them

like their own stairs? Are they somehow
enlightened? Full of knowledge of things better
than what I know? I haven't lived all my life in this thin
air – climbing higher makes my heart beat too fast, my head
dizzy and my legs weak. It is exhilaration but there is always a higher
peak flinging defeat at us from on high no matter how far we struggle. I feel
as if we are going to sea without ever having touched anything but land, and all of
the people around us with stronger lungs find it pathetic – endearing – that we are only
used to breathing the thick syrupy low-altitude air. (Is there something sweeter or superior
about theirs?) ”Just take some aspirin to thin your blood a little and you'll be fine.” Thin air,
thin blood - this does not save our eyes from being dazzled by new steepness. Anyone can
admire a mountain from a distance, scale it without proximity, but the view is better when
it's shaded with the triumph and cloud shadows we only see from the highest ridges.