

Stirred

He left before she did.  
Sipping Grey Goose and Diet Coke  
from a plastic tumbler, he slid  
heavily to the floor,  
steps-stunted, numb to love,  
hearing only the fun-house mirrors jeer  
Failure Failure Failure.  
Just keep sipping, and she will shut up.

She secreted out clothes and books  
in little trips while he slept,  
finally disappearing altogether,  
frozen, anxious,  
until    until    until

the day she woke up,  
blinking into the glare of an airplane  
wing reflecting Ethiopian sand into her  
bleary eyes. Freedom-drunk, she thought, and  
swiveled her head to the fold-down tray in front of her,  
something sausagey and soupy cooling there,  
and she wondered why she waited so long  
to leave.

## Wild Lupine

The miles, it turned out, did not  
fly by, but rather ricocheted off  
the spokes, one pebble at a time.

Soggy patches fishtailed the rear  
tire now and again, skeetered between  
hardtack and potholes, those

sisters of forbidden inattention, who sucked  
life from spine and  
scoffed at the wild lupine.

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On day two, she realized mind tricks  
did not work, even though she practiced  
at night;

The dawn and the grit did not  
bother with her confluence of  
ideas

and refused even the  
grace of a  
daydream.

So she played games with the  
mile markers, daring them to  
surprise her, and

she rooted her feet at the  
Great Divide, not at all certain whether to  
turn back, or

leap forward, but assured  
of death by indecision, and so she  
pedaled on.

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The wonder of the wild lupine, purple  
cones inhabiting both earth and sky,  
kindly assuaged deprivation

and beckoned to the falls, the locks,  
the River, and blessed the weary way.  
Morning glory, not common at all,

Chicory and Queen Anne's lace, too,  
kings and priests of a kind,  
nodded at the passerby.

They knew the lacy bridges left behind, the  
Valley of Steel, the golden  
triangle of trepidation, testing, and pluck.

To the City, they sang,  
to the City, to the City, where the  
sky could not contain the showers of champagne.

## A Marriage Begun in Edinburgh

Cobblestone gaps blackened with age  
Sharpen her dreams to wide-eyed attention;  
In the dawn mist, his face a page  
Narrating hopeful apprehension.

Sharpen her dreams to wide-eyed attention  
Do the pen and the knife and the saucer;  
Narrating hopeful apprehension,  
His plans and oft-creased maps caress her.

Do the pen and the knife and the saucer  
Now become her earth-born companions;  
His plans and oft-creased maps caress her,  
Easing her flight from memories' canyons.

Now become their earth-born companions  
Bright castle, greyfriars, and kirk;  
Easing her flight from memories' canyons  
Where dark brushstrokes of daring lurk.

Bright castle, greyfriars, and kirk—  
Soft in the dawn mist. His face a page  
Where dark brushstrokes of daring lurk  
Along cobblestone gaps blackened with age.