
We Are Each Almost

Lauren Camp

Poetry

which means I can still list every reply and the storm and twice
of what happened that October. The empty house which means we were there in her duplex and
one dawn and thousands of times I had climbed
her stairs. That year her family photo was filled with rebellions
and she could continue to sketch it worse. Which means we felt
other times such trembling and a year has passed. I remember shrubs stayed dark to the bird
rhyme, her pretty lip swimming. Which means we tallied
the usual reasons for a mind to claim every *should* and we came up
with zero. The hawk and the pink mouth of love. Which means
I always fly off, and when I do I remember to look down though I cannot name the numerous
geometries and blush of corn. The plane crosses
the middle of Birmingham or above rams in the canyon. How peaceful
the air from above. Which means it helps to look out. I have an eye
for rivers and big enough swatches of land. I want to believe there is
a point to her sighs. Which means I went every two months like a church or a nervous system. And
then when I didn't have to, I stopped.
Corners and goats, the butterflies like sultans multiplied
our dirt road which means we all must sometimes watch
from the wrong side of distance. I dream about views I know.

Chasm

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The sun breaks through snicked blind slats.
 Again and gone. Waits outside
 in scented grass. I wake in a bed not
 my own; my hands sift along
 rib and marsh, like a snake biting familiar
 edges. Enough and then look at photos on my phone: faces
 of what I could hardly forget.
 The bathroom mirror wants me
 to see the year incessant in my face: his death
 shaped from hers, and the recent
 scored months of my husband. The clanking
 that gathered him from a possibility to a smaller view. What broke
 and unbroke him, I can't remember. Whatever was
 to happen rabbled on and we let it. But I won't
 worry here and I won't
 form clear comfort either. For example, I see
 I still can't trust a stable field,
 a middle room, a bridge. Naming the shape
 of things my eye can take:
 clouds blown through sky to a hole, leaves
 at the window. Bearable slowdown.
 Everything is after an argument and a geography.
 A car passes.
 A faucet turns on in the next room.
 Only lately, this seems like salvation.

Lauren Camp serves as the New Mexico Poet Laureate. She is the author of eight books of poetry, most recently *In Old Sky* (Grand Canyon Conservancy, 2024). Her honors include a Dorset Prize, the Arab American Book Award (finalist), and a fellowship from the Academy of American Poets. Her poems have been translated into Mandarin, Turkish, Spanish, French, and Arabic.