

SIERRA

for Peter Seaton

The woman left money on the dresser
A reversal of roles, though that's the way
It is usually done in the round-
Up of mornings and men who have stayed
Over and asked to be let out
Of a door that was always open any
Way is better than a bunch of phonecalls in a rare night
Toying with a set of works,
Phones are scrambling for money in the cul-
De-Sacs, in alleys where the last
60 years didn't happen
Hear that person dancing in the alley
That isn't an alley it used to be a goal
It was an apartment house where people lived,
They called it by a hoky generic,
See she is dancing there

I fell for it and called it
by a hoky generic
A saw felled a tree
A girl fell for a boy
And wished she hadn't
Been in the careening car down
The plastic slide
Not a circle, a series,
Not a pattern, a random
or so it seems to us who have a stake
in convinced. I'm pulling the apple cart.
I'm looking at a clock that won't stop moving
In a house that, and in which by or things
Keep happening: exfoliation, exolution.
Nothing's ever enough. So backing off, she sets sail,
She leaves dollars on dressers in boarding
Houses they've both seen in popular movies
Like their lives never were, being some-
How removed just enough to make them.
~~Both want it.~~

Contingencies, colophon to end it in beauty
It doesn't matter how much who trusts who if
What I want is a human impossible, is a boarding school
Novel, is a false nature and what do writers
Know anyway how to make it from corner to scorn.
Not to deny cause, your salty curls, my scratch
the cause, your mouth between my legs
effecting change into colors of curtains--
the room tilted, was raised up, was made see,
was made of sea motions, made you between my legs
an inlet I swim down your available
spirit flicking an inch above the primed earth, me,
my legs material to write on--forge a passport
for two to a port called "Between her legs".

Signing his seaman's papers, the other falls asleep.
The one starts going home, a drinking fearless
until of a Sunny Sunday rears and barbs like sargeants
corruscate the corners of the room she hides in
with her fears. That was yesterday.
Like her fear, it was
Too much to keep in mind
Too many homes are empty in the attached houses
Too much hope gets going and shattered

She'd better leave now
She'd better rev the motor to Baltimore
She'd best be going on alone in her room

Not willing nor the earth nor letters
Some big part missing, some link so lying flaccid
An integral woods, a natural part, a path
not parted that belongs like redwoods and Indian paintbrushes,
like bluffs in Montana there is a life that allows, is comprised
not axing felled the tree nor splitting a god with a wedge
a big part of god is missing
a big part of the earth is missing
somewhere else a big part of ourselves is floating
checked out, I will check out of this room,
don't worry, I won't lean or lie
a searching party a visor worn
an instinct not informed by deserve
cosmography, a science. Slip currents
in a token of exchange she never believed in any
size lines anyway nor value parade his massive abstraction
an inlet the system blocks with all those objects,
abstracts an object, my love a feared object,
a slang articulation and an oral atavistic,
I think I'll pack a sack and stay now,
grateful for your gift.

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J. Michener