

Spring in a Time of Vacancy: Landscapes from the Distant Future

Poems by Elizabeth Albrecht

Fractions of a melody
An invisible poem
Cycling for hours
Circling the trees

Fine wine, fine wine
Treated me well
Fine lines, fine lines
I said no more
And so

Elasticity took over as I wrapped my endless hands around the clock
My palms muted the sound
I angled the clock against the light and caught a glimpse of myself in its face
Reflection
My lips curled in anticipation
My knees buckled and released
The pain was shortly numbed

A pot of soup boiled over on the stove
It became violent, sputtering hot liquid throughout the kitchen
It leaked onto the floor
The scent of duck rose from between the tiles

The moon glowed yellow that night

I transcended without bounds

I saw light, followed by darkness, light and dark, light and dark

The clock turned back and forth, back and forth

Restarting this world on a blank slate

A clean canvas

Feeling air touch this side of me for the first time

I knew I could do it

Unscathed, unmarked and virgin

Skin swam deep

Body lost

Body found

Foraging new bounds

Finding new homes

From where my blood pumps

And my stomach boils

Rearranging

Regrowing

Severing

I fell into a habit of

Left

Right

Left

Right

Swing

Swing

Kick

Kick

I grew hungry and tired

Then I walked back

Left

Right

Left

Right

Swing

Swing

Kick

Kick

Stumble

Trip

Roll

Launch

Away I went

My rambling spirit could not be stopped

If you're wondering what really happened
I turned inside out

So,
Everyone told me I was glowing
A healthy red-orange hue
Fluctuating between the skin of a radish and
Marigold
Stalky, juicy, fresh, non-perishable

Oh

So

Good

I became timeless
Age
Defying
Time
Reversing
It was sex
It was love
It was a rebirth

You were a happy baby

You came across me at a bad time
I wasn't prepared to meet someone new
But you approached me
And I did my best
You showed me why you were here
And I told you where I was trying to go
I pointed behind you
We made contact
You touched my outstretched arm

Worry doll

Every day since has been the same
But slower
Things are getting slower
Slowly
Gently
Softly
Yes
What once
Was a burning flash
A short shock
The strike of a hammer
Is
Now
Ache

I looked in the glass
Of the
empty clock face
My beating heart
Had split
From my chest
Oh
I didn't realize
I might die
I looked out
To a field of green
Of marigold
And crosses
Oh
I didn't realize
What this field housed
Disgusting
I thought

I looked to the earth and saw
The bones I did not have
The flesh I would not lose
The creatures that would not try to consume me

A worm coiled around my big toe
I looked back
To the empty clock face
Then it struck me
I won't
I remembered because I briefly forgot
And as the clouds broke
And the heavy rain fell
Lightning struck me
What followed was
Ache
Ache
Ache
But not death

Practicing and building hope for the future, I could finally see
Looking down on the world in a hot air balloon
I knew what I needed to do tomorrow and every day thereafter

Humming

That night, I dreamt of a parade
With shiny black cars and a marching band
Thousands of spectators lined the street

My life has been filled with the comfort
Of fabric and clay
Paint and ink
Little here there
They there here
At home, where I sit, sleep, eat
Make, understand, learn
I go beneath the blankets
I need nowhere but
Little here there
They there here

I knew I could do it as soon as I opened my eyes that morning
I felt more alive than I had in a long time, and the feeling was all-consuming
I bent over to stretch my legs and felt nothing
I don't know why I thought that would work
Yesterday, I wouldn't have tried

There I was, dancing beneath the trees
The elastic girl of the fields
The pink girl of the meadow
The yellow girl of the moon

The field was soaked in dew

I pulled at the grass and released pearls from the soil
It must have felt nice for the tightly packed earth

Leaps and bounds

My body carried me through like a horse was between my legs

Skis were on my feet

And these roads were the powdered Alps

Ache swam beneath me
Until you came along
I asked for your hands
To reach under my skin
And pry at the rope
You were an expert
You knew which threads to pull
And which to let be
Because you know me so well
Sometimes we're even tied together
Like a bundle of sticks
Or logs
Like a raft
Tied tight so that
When the rapids roar
And glow whiter than the snow
We'll end up somewhere
Unexpected
But all in one piece

Boils in the paper show me
The roof has leaked overnight
An illustration of salt and rust
I turn the page in my hands until I come to understand
It's a symbol meaning I should not turn my back
On the person who once saw my most vulnerable self
What if they separate into a thousand seeds that travel miles
Only to end up on dry stones
Who will have seen the part of me that I wish to be remembered by?
Who has had that vision?
Who will tell my story?
I need someone to believe

The wading pool basked in the last rays of sun
Broth of a day well spent
It drained through its cracks into the soil of the yard
And fed the living meters below
Imagine a web of roots finally awakened by a springtime trifle
Only to break the surface two springs later
And one spring, after the pool was trashed

Wind chimes

This time I decided to go left
I walked a few miles until the paths joined up again and I was on my old route
I saw the barn from a distance instead of walking right next to it
It didn't look as torn up from there and you would maybe even assume it was still in use

You could have told me you weren't going to be there
But I'm glad you didn't

Laughing surrounded by people I just met
Feeling lost and at the same time I'm nowhere at all
I'm not transported to a memory or teleported into the future
But I'm analyzing who I am now
Is this where I belong?
Which one of these people will I string to my thread?

I saw you from across the street
 Across the ditch
 Through the fence
 On the log
 In the field
Your back was turned

I approached you as a broken vessel
Recently shattered by the wind
My tears were only starting to freeze
I killed my emotions and called your name
I may have needed you, but I don't know

You glanced over your shoulder

I don't think you expected someone so transparent
To embody the voice you heard
You must have barely seen me until you fully turned around
And examined the particles of light
In my vicinity
Static fuzz over the road

Your tears were long frozen
They formed icicles on your chin
We saw each other like we saw ourselves, and cried together as if we were one

Crying with you, I was raw
Freshly birthed
Pink and red
Like the skin of a radish
Marigold

You struck me as someone who wouldn't question my story

I raged on through dry grasses

I raged on through dry grasses

I raged on through dry grasses

My skin textured in tiny threads

Reed and wave

I left a trail that no one would ever see and the grasses sang as I swam through

I'm not too detached from my everyday life but I'm much more drawn to this one

As you told your story, I looked in your eyes to try and see what you were reliving
I looked in your ears, wondering if you were scared of the way your story sounded out loud
I watched your nose twitch as you spoke, and every time you blinked
I wondered if a tear would escape you
But it never did, and after you finished speaking
I still hadn't found what I was looking for

