

And cloth still dries on the line - Emily Small @ The Last Straw

Walking into the chapel everything is cool and quiet. If the fertile little blades of sweetgrass wave in the yard, they do so silently. Silent is the leaf that sits unstirred, silent is the leaf which rests at the cardinal points, that finds its dry home on a stalk, that seeps and stews in the vat and lifts out its own pigment, offering. *I bequeath this to you, do with it what you wish.*

Coming in out of the tide, calves sandy to the knees, canvas flapping in the wind, it's the appointed time to pull on the sweater which, absent its companion, may lay stretched to dry, to catch the breeze and air itself out, to get salt in the weft and weave of its wool. Held aloft on the line, the lolling repository is waiting for whatever, and held pert against the sea, waxed and rigid, the itinerant pollinators have again contributed to the world-readiness of the weave — sticking out like a tongue, like a spout, the theater mask.

BEACH RENTALS is posited and now, the playthings make believe to be leaves and tents, make believe to soar through the air on the perpetual gust, and carried forward the accordion from the fish restaurant goes one, two, three, four like panting uphill, every step a concerted effort.

When you stitch the thing yourself, when you pick the leaf from that tree over there, that brittle and beautiful branch, so elegant in its frustration, you become aware of the thingness of all things, the color and chemical make-up of *this block* doing much to differentiate the tent from the hat from the awning from the — the flag for no captain, the ship missing its body, the chair covered and hung, the sweater empty, all waiting for the keeper to return, a vigil for the body back in place. Pick us up when the party's over, we're here when you need us.

And the scrap of the little towel, tented and perked next to that hardened mass, all porous and sharp — Is it rock? Is it woven? Does it matter? From the sea and to the sea, dune buggy.

From behind the scrim, the light on, appearing noiselessly, cued or gestured, beckoned to sit and sketch long lines on a cream sheet, drawing the walls, drawing those stripes, oriented down, oriented side to side, oriented stitches and the window blinds snatches of images, just fields of dark and light. It's the image of the car, that is plucked off the wall and hidden, the image of the woman, pinned back-to-front, so you won't see red stitches, just bands of cream and white. And knitting. Knitting until there is sand in every stitch, every row, and every line.

Then, dark or light will cry out from this place, and overhead, the eucalyptus, whaling on, waving in the wind, into the secret pockets of the day, will be all leaves, all open and fragrant. And breathing deeply, the toes will go in first, the hairs of the leg lifting, then the knees, the mid section, then the breasts until, taking one heaving breath, the head will go under, too, so that with wool heavy on the body, all will be water again.

- Alexandra Pink