

Nevadan to Nevadan: a biggest little lament

Sophie Duvall

Hello,
I hope you're doing well.
Even if you aren't,
I know you're probably doing better than me
because you're always ready to remind me
how much worse *this* state is
without you in it.

I hate that you almost made it feel better to be here
when we were hip-to-hip on the top of that hill,
and the valley was cradled in our hands
with Reno splayed out under our eyes like an autopsy.
Do you remember me pointing out fourth street?
The artery of lights flowing neatly from the hospital I was born in
down past the motel where my grandparents honeymooned
til it dwindled into the Sierras?

Did the strands of NO VACANCY signs scream at you in bloody hues from there?
Louder than my pulse against your ear,
Louder than the Truckee softly humming,
louder than the gentle silhouette of Mount Rose standing tall in her protective way,
louder than the warm breathy breeze of May coursing through the sagebrush?

I don't think you needed me to tell you
that this place is bigger than the hardening walls of Fourth Street,
Bigger than the wailing from the riverside,
Bigger than these overbearing mountains, even.
Just like you didn't need to tell me everything
this place is littler than:
such as,
from there at least,
the palms of our hands.

That night, after you started back west
and I sank back into the embrace of the valleys,
the city quietly sutured itself closed
in your unobserved grasp
with me still in it.
I do wonder if that made it any less grotesque to you,

or all the easier for you to discard on your way out
like litter tossed out the window onto the interstate.

Anyway. What I meant to write?
Today, it was 104 degrees in Reno,
(felt like 110 if you work near the pavement on Prater like I do)
and everyone's been waiting on the coasts to bring the gusts,
the Rain, The Clouds:
Anything
from wherever you are now.
But it just keeps getting caught in the mountains
that neither of us are coming around anytime soon.

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