

LETTER FROM THE GOLDFIELD HOTEL, 2022

Courtney Cliften

Haunted hotel, abandoned,
but we knew the man with the key—
not a coaster man,
a bullets-on-the-nightstand man.
Even if the elevator were up and running,
none of us would have trusted it.
Staircases without handrails,
an open vault, empty,
pile of pigeons on the ledge
outside the third story window, dead.
Too much snow on the ground
for anything other than
the road trip potato chips
and case of Coors Light.
We lit some candles,
scattered ourselves around the living room
waiting to claim any flicker as spirit,
took turns sharing stories of our firsts:
A double wide, “House of Wax,” casino urinal, Doritos.
We all had a feeling the spirits might be listening,
and maybe we wanted it that way.
It’s not that there are more stars in the Goldfield sky,
it’s just that you can see more of them.



Photograph by Courtney Cliften