

To the Mirage Meadow Vegas Valley

Elizabeth Quiñones-Zaldaña

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Had someone shown me
the Spring Mountains at dawn
I might have loved you at the start.
But from the moment we arrived
I said one day I would leave.
Good thing you've heard
enough mourning veiled in bluster
to wait out the monochrome lament.
It appears like shale, scorched
but it breaks apart over time:
the places you don't resemble,
the places we left for a reason.
Did you foresee my change of heart?

We drove over the Sierra Nevada range
from the deep end of border-crossing fantasies.
A woman offers a solution and a key,
a man turns the ignition. This will take us far.
That's how it went down. Goodbye
is a tide that does not recede.
It washes us inland.

I struggle to tell you—though my second language
and you—my second home, have drawn me in
nearer than my first. Am I disloyal?
Now especially—having stopped
all that talk of leaving once I was able to go.
Proximity is everything. The asphalt grid,
with its fence of interlocking hands
is open. To my surprise, I will not remain
in this mirage meadow valley.
I will take you with me.
Did you already know?

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