

From a Nevadan

Emilee Wirshing

There is a mother here
in the rubble and the dust,
as far as I ever got I came back to her,
loved her
loved myself
in her image.

The West was won in a saloon
over a poker hand
and a screaming slot machine.

This place remembers
even the drinks spilled
over high tables
the out-turned pockets,
the moment before
that wheel stopped cycling
and any number
was a winner,
you had to pick one was all,
and you did,
because the charm was ammonia
on a weary life.

I remember coming home
over the valley
to an oasis of light.

The stars were false
but the city was true,
I felt it then,
a fortune of gaudy joy,
be this city,
she said to me,
and I was, suddenly
and always, her native.