

# The Meadows: Letter To and From Las Vegas

Charlene Stegman Moskal

*Twang your magic twanger Froggy,*  
Light up that cigar, meet me at the slots.  
Bring your compadres, all the players,  
all the tricksters, generations of try your luck,  
down on your luck, if only all the luck I had  
wasn't bad luck.

Show me how neon and flash  
accentuate the shape that is you.  
Climb the skyscrapers;  
see your reflection in copper windows,  
swing like King Kong on the skeletons  
of construction as you reach for beauty.

Tourists with their tongues out sniff the air,  
try to find you, but you, elusive as any myth,  
follow the magician's wand, disappear into the ether.

Shape changer, rabbit in a hat, setting up the rubes,  
laughing at the chaos falling from your pockets.  
When the music turns to lullaby have you a place  
to lay your head, rest the frantic spirits that bore you?

Are there pockets of compassion,  
in your green and gold and silver raiments  
or is hope only another throw of the dice,  
another spin of the wheel, another pull of the handle?

Fortune rides you like the bitch she is;  
Las Vegas, you pirouette in a tutu of mistaken dreams.  
Take off the skirt, allow the charlatans who hide there,  
who breath in your essence to go some other place.

Throw them off, take a moment to regret  
all the compressed lies you have told,  
the half-truths you have dangled,  
the empty promises to those who blindly follow  
your fife to the edge of belief.

Look at your naked mountains, beautiful and generous,  
as the sun gives chase to tin-pots dressed in sequins  
to steal back the sparkle of Nevada from the crow's beak.