

From The World's Rarest Fish To The Desert's Favorite Tortoise

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It's been a long time, Mojave Max.

Cult classic,
that thing you do.

It makes the crowds buckle at their knees every time — the
crowds here, I mean, the crowds in Vegas —
and those specific lifers end up adoring your tired, saggy self. Lifers
like you.

And me, I suppose.

Keeping abreast
of all the trends, proving old boys
can learn new tricks.

Cerulean cut-crystal under your beady eyes,
pulling focus from the blackness behind them.
Or tight synthetics under a desert sky.

It's a no from me, babe.

You can't pull off blue like I can.

But then, what do I know?
Dynastic, bombastic you —
always looking for a spot in the sun —
would have me think nothing at all.

It was once my goal to outlive you.

To outlive a corpse-dry tortoise,
wrinkled from the sun,
with scars on his arms and legs like
pale ribbons of silk taffeta —
that was my Charleston to scale.

Seems silly, now,
but this year,
I had a small hope that your overlong brumation
would herald for me that victory.

Ah, well —
there's always next year.

If living behind mountains
keeps us from seeing the desert for the scrub, then
we might just both need new glasses.

But I know, certain as I'll ever know,
that the first time you saw cerulean
shine under the Mojave moonlight
was when you first saw me
circling in Devils Hole below you
and thought,
“I'm going to end this thing's whole species.”

And, y'know?
You just might.

Deceitfully yours,
A lone pupfish