Familiars

          *by mckenna delton*

​

Maybe I’m too

sentimental,

but red berries

frozen in place

look like

christmas ornaments.

So dramatic--

I get small

to see lichens &

mosses

on their level.

I found a tuft of fur

full of white bones.

It was a good omen.

An eagle rising

above the smoggy soup.

I played in the rocks,

chasing bliss.

Soft earth bowed

under foot.

Jagged angles

on the distant horizon,

muffled by fog.

I’ve always hated the phrase

“object of my affection,”

but maybe i’m just

a romantic.

I get lost wandering

along spider-webbing trails

too often for it to be

by accident.

Time passes differently

by lamplight.

I get lost there too.

I think I read once:

It is the familiar spirit

of this place.

I might be hopeless,

but I think we make

an uncommon pair.

I’m soft -

I look for birds

they are my kindred

spirits.

I choose to dance

every day

& be taken away

by dreams.

Small talk

              *By mckenna delton*

another state of emergency declared

                 this time for drought

                                 heat like a fishbowl

                                                smelling of dust & sagebrush

                                                                 everything slowing down

                                                 the high desert grows drier

                                    & drier

                    too many dead perennials

supposed to live forever

everything has changed

               but the people and the place

                                the flood reduced to a trickle

                                                a consequence of the modern age

                                 lovers meeting at a strange time

                                                 an antidote to the sickness

                                                                & loathing

                                                  somewhere for wanderers

                                 to come home to

                  forced out before long

a strong wind

                 coming down out of the canyon

                                 smelling like water

                                                  small talk and rivers

                                  if only meager things

                                  still had a chance

                    i’d wish things were different

                    but what’s the use in that

the calling

*By mckenna dalton*

*​*

“I sometimes choose to think, no doubt perversely, that man is a dream, thought an illusion, and only rock is real. Rock and sun.”                                                                      --edward abbey

​

i dreamt of snakes & coyotes

asleep under the juniper tree.

   her name is Voodoo      she told me

she is free under the sky--

its endless stars.

caught somewhere between sleep & waking

comatose

on a bed of snakes.

panicked & stumbling,

no way to break free

from the living wave--

it follows my feet

content to be crushed under them.

              ⸺

i live in a concrete box

no windows to let in the light

        day in day out       i live to serve

i eat food from a plastic bag

i drink coffee from a machine

compounding triglycerides

& complacency -- eyes

glazed over,

plump & soft & manicured

hands

i fear im losing--

but still the calling remains

in the back of my skull

                                                                                         ⸺

the valley is sick with a cancer

the sprawling city a blight

on the foothills

neighborhoods of concrete & strip malls

& fun for the whole family

too loud

the calling drowned out          a whisper now

⸺

I see the future from today--

a forgotten mansion

carved into hillside

-- I want it buried in snow.

tufts gather on branches & the exposed frame

weighing heavy on wood & steel alike.

life comes with the melt

branches bend

under the weight of moving water.

the sun seeps

trickles into cracks

& the freeze breaks

brick & mortar

food for the topsoil below.

magpies perch & fly

shattering the stillness

of a waiting winter forest.

 their wings leave soft kisses

on the powdery carpet,

& rabbits make winter burrows

of window sills & concrete.

the land is unlearning             its civilization

              ⸺

there’s something tugging at me

im caught on a wave I can't escape.

whispers haunt me

i hear them in the wind that shakes me as I sleep

--ripping sparks from the bed of coals

as it howls cold & violent in the night,

a millennia of beating on red cliffs-

the calling is choking me

i see its shadow on high peaks

--the sun filters through clouds

high patches of fire & light --

     i can almost make it out

in those quiet & lonely places…

***Mckenna Delton*** is a Utahn who has been writing poems for three years. She has had poems published in the 2019 and 2021 editions of *Metaphor Undergraduate Literary Journal* and is currently working on self-publishing a collection of poetry. These poems are heavily influenced by concepts surrounding femininity and the natural world; they take a cynically hopeful look at the anthropogenic annihilation of the environment that is evident to those who are willing to look. Delton is pursuing a Master’s degree in Ecology at Utah State University and plans to write a book in the near future.