

# lindsay remee ahl

## DREAM OF THE MYTHOGRAPHIC ABYSS

Long before the midnight parking lot altar,  
    torchlight, alter light, promises  
                                in the river night — long before James allowed  
the invocation and didn't look, didn't pause,  
                                and yes, vanished in the fog, mountains, rock  
towers built in the rushing  
    river — we were on a crossroads, a dirt road, a no return.

In that moment that folds from one man into all men,  
    one love into all love, one tree into the oak tree,

I stood in the parking lot across from Hotel Saint Francis  
    and knew that James, knight of dreams, was standing  
  on a highway in the middle of the line  
with the wind at his back.

And the song playing faintly from the car  
on the other side of the parking lot,  
                                oddly, was the song James sang to me  
    that first night — river of promises in his still-lit voice, river of jewels,  
endings, meet me at the river rock towers.

SLOW, SLOW, EACH LETTER, WHERE

Gliding across a cliff, the shadow of a wing —  
a trace of fire I follow.

You burned my letters, my photos, but there,  
in the curve

of your neck —  
my breath.

I'm walking a deserted back highway, and up ahead —  
a cottonwood,  
the only shade.

A stranger.

He offers me  
a cigarette (tobacco flying  
in the wind), and what  
would I keep if I could?

This rock in my pocket, tawny and striped, almost smooth,  
the world everywhere in it —  
maybe every rock bird cliff dog screaming tire—every

bright glow, reptilian  
motion, molecular blaze

— Yes, I wanted

to keep  
your letters, to trace

each shadow gesture,

every word-turned-flesh.

NEW ABYSSES OPEN TO YET OTHER ABYSSES

Naked, bleeding, unmoving: a body  
flung on my porch — the body  
of a murdered man. Snow falling. Roads  
already ice. It's late. I'm calling 911 when I see  
the body breathe. Police and ambulance arrive, lights  
revolving. A glint in the snow: the man's glasses  
and a pack of Marlboros. He must have staggered  
from his house during the storm, naked, armed

with glasses and a pack of cigarettes, and fell —  
head, elbows, knees slamming pavement.  
And the next night, a woman stands on my porch  
just where naked man had been, accusing me  
of an affair. She won't leave, so police again —  
revolving lights, another report. I imagine her lover  
is the body on my porch, flung as though murdered,

trying to crawl away as she sucks up the drama  
like cool oxygen. The easy back, familiar shock:  
nowhere but where you are, is who you are.  
My husband, seeing the naked heap of a man  
on our porch, thought, Ah, that's *my* body — I gave  
myself over, and I've finally arrived. Later, the body  
is mine: hadn't I left the house — naked as snow, lightning  
behind me — seeking how to light a fire on my skin?