

Abduction

*Fall Creek High School
October 1974*

1.

On the walk home from school,
Wendy and I pretended our pom-poms
were a pair of bustles. Streamers lit with air,
yellow as the tails of horses. I wanted
to tell her brother, *It'll be this weekend—*

at their parents' boathouse, the black
gum leaves crushed red as knees
to the dock, I would consider. No matter
how he kissed in the needle-licked
dark, I could try to imagine it
otherwise. Up-lifting. I wanted to feel
someone else's power blossoming
down my body in a vine of light.

Isn't that what it means to ask
for love? Wendy brought her hand
around to her forehead: the pom-pom
translucent bangs. Above us the street-
lamps, their glass eyes opening.

2.

Our town is not known for strangeness.
Every night, the greyhounds teethe apart
the wire that separates one back yard
from another. Protectors, not thieves,
they howl to keep the moon from coming
down to us. But I tell them quiet. Let danger
walk near. I thought I, too, had an animal
in me before I learned how to cache
my desire, claw-footed, noisy as the sky

3.

I don't know what came over me that night.
Except that I had to wander down. I brought
a pencil to the basement. The house above me
sleeping through its dreams of coins and faces.

I confess. I had been receiving for weeks—
doll-sized pictures, to my head, like a television.
Yes, a yellow electric and egg. A fatherly voice
not my father saying, *Keep her*. Outside the trees
would divide if my body could fill them.

My hand rose as if carried by an elevator.

Someone was conducting my thinking.

I pressed the pencil into the wall so hard
the graphite splintered. All the air in my mouth,
like a chrome ball finally tight and spinning.

When I was finished, I closed my eyes.
Isabel, it read, *turn around and look at us*

4.

The six of them carried

me by my muscles. Forget
the bones. They smelled
unlucky. Of tin or fire.

Through the shadows I
could see their faces

widening. Silver-skinned,
without ears or mouths.
I tried talking but they

had no ears or mouths.

We walked up. The sky
ate my fingers first—

and then the rest of me.

5.

In class on Monday I couldn't remember
which element was eighty-six. I wrote
bismuth. Beneath me Wendy's feet
balanced in the book basket, and at the center
of the model atom clipped to the ceiling,
the nucleus hung, a bright prisoner.

How much can we imagine? Inside my mouth
my own teeth hunted me quietly. Listening.

And I have memories.
I walk through them as if a house
I grew up in: the room in which river dogs
tongued at my toes. The room in which
scissors and slaver. Something
gave me a name, it held my hand
to pin it down beside a butterfly.

To be studied like that there must be love
in the eyes.

Tonight, Wendy's brother will lace
his skates closed and raise his hockey stick
to the ceiling as if challenging it.
I will be watching from the bleachers.
In the ice: blades licking through the light.

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<https://crazyhorse.submittable.com/submit> (Back Issue Number 86).