

Blue in Green

She says no one ever takes her to the carousel. She says the beautiful thing spins round and round on the corner of Merrill and Westmont. That the colors—they collide like melted crayons, explode like candy rainbows.

And yet I know for a fact the thing is a rusted fire hazard of spinning children who scream all day long as the gravity shifts in their small bellies. I say this and then she says that she too has a small belly. She says children see the world in a blur of primary colors. Mostly greens and blues. Like our eyes, she says. Like mine and like hers and they too could combine. Mine are blue and hers are green. It is Sunday morning; we are heading North toward her mother's. This has nothing to do with carousels.

We stop beneath the traffic light. I pass the white line just a foot. I inhale. She looks across at me for a second. She has this way of staring through people as though we are all made of glass and she is the glass blower. I told her this once and she did not understand if it was a compliment or an insult.

"Blue and green makes a mess," I say, savvy to the subject. I grin, but she hesitates. She adjusts her thin shoulder under the strap of the seat belt. Sometimes I think the wind can break her. The light changes to green and I go. We turn left and there the carousel rotates past in the opposite direction. The steel disk relic is orange and mostly empty and not worth a quarter to ride, let alone three dollars.

"That's a pack of cigarettes, honey," I say.

"We should quit today anyway."

And I know we are going to ride it. I know this. Not riding would be like stopping the rain. So we park the car in the gravel lot in front of a grass field of porta-potties,

picnic tables, and open iron grills. Above the foul chemical smell, the leafy breeze of October is alive in the air. I catch a sniff and some old images pass. Some things distant, some things all new and unexplored, with strange people unfamiliar, in a place I've never been.

A toothless, cigar-smelling man takes our money. He smiles at her. I've grown used to this kind of thing, but still I could hit him in the nose and feel better about it. I try not to look as his eyes follow her. Perhaps I haven't grown used to anything yet.

"These horses look terrible," I say.

"They need fresh paint, that's all."

I can see her years from now, owning this mechanical wretch—fixing and loving it and never giving up on it. Her fingers gently brush the plastic manes as she passes them. There is the way her fingers linger on things, as though they either gather some part of what she touches or gives apart of herself away. A million years ago I was by myself, looking for a job, going to bars with friends, and dreaming of a better life than middle class and solitude.

With their mouths wide open, the horses look like they were turned to plaster mid-scream.

"It's a glue factory amusement park," I say, and she laughs.

Cars pass on the cobblestone street as the mechanical pulley starts with a squeak. We find two horses and climb into the curves of plastic saddle. The vibraphone melody winds into the air. Above our heads, the speakers crackle and spin, dangled by duct tape. And it's odd to be here suddenly. In motion, in a circle, on the edge of an intersection with the girl I love. Odd because these are the scenes you never plan out, yet always find yourself drawn towards. The red and green lights blink and spin with us like an audience of Christmas elves. Through the intersection, the cars pass us by. The life of a small town heading to work, returning home, buying things and dreaming and raising families. The world spins in many

directions at once. What doesn't burr, I wonder? And who wants to stay in one place anyway? Why not spin on a street corner with children and horses?

We ride. The world is loud and distorted. A small boy laughs behind us.

The striped poles rise and fall between our fingers. The metal floor tilts. I see the toothless man duck behind the generator with a beer can.

A new line forms with parents and their eager children. The trees blur to green, the sky to blue. She waits to say it. For a moment she is exactly like these horses: petrified in some spinning moment. We are outside time, eternal in our three-dollar fate.

"When blue combines with green, I promise not to forget this," she says.

And then all she does is touch the bare skin of my forearm. Leaving a part of herself and forever gathering a part of me.