

TEND

My stale phrase, my little departure, takes the shape of a teapot. I place it in the desert. From here I see all year I had been poised as if waiting with someone beside me. Now it matters less how true any of this, whether my hands did shift, goldish, bulbous loquats in the valley. I read, slept, rode a pale blue bicycle. Steady or drunk, wind or none. Whether or not my palm worked loose the fine spine of that lobed cactus, I open only briefly before I shut like a screen door. The other side swings into focus, crosshatched.

OH OR STOP

Four women in the minivan note that the inlet has emptied completely. Sharp curve back from town. Sand and muck flash. Low sun. Bare arms of rockweed, palmaria, kelp. A week made long in seaweed hours: in sketching it, in inking and pressing its forms to paper or to cloth, in extracting its color for dye, in draping its weight over one's own body or others' bodies, in taking portraits that way. In the thick light around the next turn, which filters through a bank of pine, the women at first don't see and so don't stop for the fawn, so small it feels like a glitch. One says Oh or Stop and they wait as the animal slips down the roadside, shaking, crosses the narrow asphalt. The women think A place can become unrecognizable to itself. Think I feel my brain, shifting. Warm, base of my skull. Think Fawn means a doe, hidden. Roughly there: doe. Moving again, they reach for window-level branches and pinch, inhale. Heat and dry sap. Out of sight the inlet fills, empties, fills, empties, fills.