

missing item #7

by aksania xenogrette

she stares at the shipping manifest,
inside the wooden crate plied open,
a plastic envelope static with sawdust.
the gallery address penned with crossed sevens,
and patient block letters from his small hands.
sealed between wax paper and cellophane tape.
she guides her scissors around the plain loop
of his thumbprint.

she remembers wearing heels at the reception.
she stood an awkward inch taller, listening
to him talk about the weather in manchester.
picturing sex with him... she sinks her fingers
into the styrofoam beads with skipping pulse.
she holds the supple figurine, smooth quartz
warming to her touch.

in her bedroom, opening night of his solo show
she is snapping her nylons to center the seam
stretching from her toes to where the line disappears
into the hem of her dress. now in the gallery light
she stands close at eye-level in sling-back flats
in measured pauses she holds the bottle to her lips.

they step outside the fire door for a cigarette.
she stares at his hands, their swaying banter
lost in a rhythm of sips. denying the impulse
to resist, she says, it's a shame about the figurine...
and drops her lighter behind her. oops. she swivels
and limbers slowly down, all the way to her ankles,
hoping her hemline rises well above the line of decency.

