

Non-Self: Light, Dark

by Beth Thomas

A fire burns in our fireplace while we sleep. The fire casts shadows on the wall, creating silent players from lamps and figurines. Past, movement, fitting into spaces where we cannot follow -- shadows have purpose. They return to their identifiable form by the act of our waking and seeing.

The Morning Glories turn out of their envelopes. Your calmness at the rising of the sun renders the moon silent and ashamed in its withdrawal. The Morning Glories open their mouths, gasping as though nearly drowned. You gather their faces in the palms of your hands and their purple eyes blink, blink, unseeing.

Desert heat creates an optical illusion. The walk to town is two miles. The sun creates wavy wet patches on the pathway that disappear as we reach them, the end of a rainbow. We pass blue-tailed lizards, their fat bodies warming on the rocks. They flick meaty tongues and tell you that their lives revolve around sun and shade. Do you realize in the retelling that the lizards, too, are illusory? That when approached, they move away and can never be touched? You have already forgotten their words, but your eyes are forever open, watching the sky.

