

pockets

by Brian Michael Barbeito

That place was on a summit and hardly anything grew there and it wasn't for lack of turning over the earth or tending the loam and it wasn't either for lack of sun because the violent storms had felled anything that could block the light years and even decades before. On figurative paper and on the ledger that the man kept scribbled notes it should have all made sense and some form of crop or even wild plant might have flourished fully or else and at the least shown some motivation towards life and to 'catch' as it were.

Nothing caught and hardly anything moved save for the wind that came coldly even when spring was supposed to have broken open and that wind did not have a poem or song and if it said anything at all it only told and told quickly that there would be no bounty or future fortune of any sort, this was all that was being given, this cold wind and no more.

The heart of the land there had been hardened and the man wondered what karma he had accrued or sin he had committed though he did not think or talk in such terms and did not really write or even read at all. His scribblings were pencil markings with lines and a few dots designating only things he was trying to figure out and even when one of the three young ones or the female adult glanced in the cool mornings or difficult evening hours upon the pages of the peculiar self-made almanac, the vague markings and haphazard diagrams could not be deciphered.

The three wore the same clothing every day and there was no water but there were two containers, one in front that observed the barren fields below and one in back that looked further up the summit as if for a sign and the summit never said anything back in all the years the group lived there.

The young were two boys and the girl and the girl was the oldest and she stood awkwardly because she did not know what to do with her height or quite how to manage herself other than to help with the most ordinary tasks. She was not deficient in any real or pronounced way but had not had any interactions with the larger world.

There were no books and there was not even a requisite Holy Book and instead there was only the man's strange sheets of paper with the poet maudit-like pencil markings that were a try at some kind of order but only and always resulted in a broken friendship with responsibility or worse, what had become in the recent years only a personal codified chaos.

The mother had deep set eyes and once someone said in passing that she must have had Indian in her history. The three young did not know what this meant one way or another and they did not know what an Indian was. Once the woman was what people would call pretty, and her movements in a few of those brief years before had contained a certain agility and grace that the young, healthy, or happy often inherit.

Now she did not have any of that save for perhaps a remnant of part of a light fleck that could be discerned in the eye if one looked at the right time and looked fast enough. But she herself hardly was conscious of such, and the man only scratched his head and gazed out towards the bottom fields and sometimes higher up the summit waiting for something that was not going to come.

There was no oracle and not even a belief one way or the other down at the core of the group. They only and always just simply were, the way the summit was, and nobody talked of the place or who made it and the four didn't really even know if the man had such knowledge. Sometimes something in the girl made her stare out the window at the side that had no glass and wish for something.

Her eyes clenched tighter at those times, like teeth, and she wished with a good and true type of fury and might.

When she opened her eyes again nothing had changed and she did not even hold an emotion like irritation or disappointment because those things were not true things at all but instead constructed luxuries of spoiled citizens in a falsified world. She did not know this. She only continued to stare placidly out towards the place in the middle distance where the sun was beginning to descend as if into a pocket someone had sewn in the earth.

