

Woman On A Bicycle

by Emily Hopkins

Beautiful woman, I passed you today, only
once.

And to think! A lifetime may be born before I saw you.

You did not notice, I expect, as you rode your bicycle on the road
beside the sea.

Does it bother you that I find you beautiful?
Such inequality in a word! My self, repetitively of fleeting worth
was distracted by your common form.

You wore a blue dress and the sky
was gray in a new storm, gathering wind and breath held rain.

And the ocean was black and green and blue—as your dress that
clung to your body's curve. Round as the bend of the water trailing
the false line of the shore.

Would you have stopped with me—would I have asked?

I could show you this sea, and we could smell the bitter release of
cut grass, wet now in the maiden drops of rain.

The wind slid between your legs and lifted your
skirt—slightly—and you
flashed the white nude skin of your thick thigh. You did not slow, but
pushed and pedaled through the hands of your traitor. Do not be
embarrassed,

I was struck.

The clouds are black now, swollen and deep as the ocean spread
below them. The rain falls
across the fat of your bare arms.

Are you prideful, woman?

The storm crashes upon you; ruins your dress.

You are a bright painted stroke dripping plump and heavy upon
Mephistopheles' sulky canvas.

You are a moving contrast of light.

Water blurs the division of sky and sea,
and you and I are drops within the full nothingness.

Who are you, woman?

You possess. My eyes, rain pierced watch.
Now the fat of my arms, flesh of my thick thigh, slippery. I am
beauty, and you are a woman on a bicycle.

Morning tempest reveals reflection; shows
identical what is. Beyond
this sky, this sea. Beyond
a spoiled blue dress and slick white flesh.
Beyond the inadequacy of my self and the trouble of defining
beautiful.

I passed you.

I am blind, my lover tells me in the night, in the day, in between in
the kitchen. He
traces the pear shaped form of my breasts,
tastes the salt of my bare freckled skin,
takes a goddess, he sees.

Beautiful woman, he says.

Do not be afraid,
I will not think of you again.

