

Just Wrong

by Gary Percesepe

I spent twelve years in Buffalo one winter lying on a mattress looking out the window. The breakup with J filled my teeth with blood, which I mistook for antifreeze. I imagined myself dressing to go outdoors. Time was exhausted. Hours hung on the line like frozen shirts. Neighbor children kicked rubber balls and broke their feet. I lay in bed and thought of J-- her rasping voice, her peasant feet, long bare throat, the way her retreat slipstreamed me like baby ducks. Soon, I reasoned, maybe very soon, she would be only a brown memory. We know these women only from their leavings. We love to watch them go. I lay in bed in Buffalo and tried to fix her in the vernacular, to recall her sly alto arias. Then I thought, Wait, I'm free from her little bit of sunshine. She killed with one cold glance, made me think I existed in the wrong hour of dawn. Sometimes you get wedged into the wrong romantic corner, run out of rubles. But maybe I asked for it? As when a clock dies no one wakes. Outside it was cold, really cold. Air crawled out of tires. Eleven elves dropped dead in the basin. A moth caught fire on the street post light; the moon dressed in a white nightgown. Shall I be forgiven? Forgotten? Outside, the wind roared and ice formed on the lashes of the sky. Sand froze in gutters. Please, someone, interrupt.

