

A Little Load of Paint

by John Olson

Cézanne sags during a moment of paint. There is an umbrella in the room whose surface collects his thoughts. Outside, in the rain, the grass and garden smell strongly of spring. Fruit litters the table. Light through the window writhes in conversation with shape and color. There are elevations beyond the mind. There are nerves that will bring the world closer. There are nerves that bring the universe to our tongues and ears. Some shapes demand red. Some green. Some yellow. A few blue, or black. Black is the ocean that guzzles us when we open to its possibilities. The road is wife to the husband horizon. You cannot muzzle a color with shape. Shape is to color what rock is to dirt. Clay imparts a stunning vindication of resilience. The eyes find their syntax in tears. Consciousness is malleable. You can put the universe in a jar if it rolls by your feet. Later, toward evening, it will glow. It will swallow you whole. It will collide with everything you think you know. Everything you think you think you know. Then press your hand to your forehead and feel that weariness turn to straw. The lightness of a thread blown upward with the breath. In thought. In reverie. In linear intricacies and a crisp blue line bringing contour to a jug. Volumes anchored to a surface of linen. Lines on linen in which the essence of seeing is itself a theater, a stunning echo of consciousness in pigment and space.

