

The Color of Sleep

by John Olson

Have you ever seen a body of words give birth to a paragraph? I won't lie. It's a little gross. But quite moving. First there is the biology of reproduction. A blackbird living in an electric guitar, for instance, and its inexplicable urge to mate with an elephant. The noise of which sounds like a croque-monsieur falling through a sheet of plywood. There are screams and moans followed by the roar of Jules Verne speeding through Nice in a sports car. This is what makes writing such a strange occupation. It is like sewing a haunted temperature to an oasis of inalienable yearning. Paint becomes an animal and the wealth of an unbridled idea dangles its power from the end of a stick. Or pen. Or keyboard. Doesn't matter. It's all symbolic. All a matter of signs and omens and anonymous tips. Think of a lotus blossoming on a sheet of paper. It pops open like church doors after a wedding and is then washed by the tears of the sky soon after reality sets in. Thunder breaks on the face of a mountain and in the distance can be heard rings of the Viking swordmaker as he brings his hammer down on a blade of hot steel. My comprehension of time is imperfect, I know, but bear with me. I've been fired several times already and I know what that feels like. I can share that with you later if you'd like. But for now I'd just like to draw attention to my new wallet. It's whalebone and leather and big as a library. It is the product of many forces. Mass, velocity, torque, and friction. It is why I am including it in this paragraph, because this paragraph needs a direction, and must eventually learn to walk on its own. When the world was newly formed, a body of water crawled into an amphibian and began to crawl around nibbling on ferns. Everything has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Except for this paragraph. Death is the ultimate voyage, but this isn't that. This is a body of words pushing meaning to its furthestmost frontier. That place where the earth is freshly awakened by rain and the roots of speculation multiply in the fertility of darkness. We see a body of words oozing from the canal of a fertile

imagination and find that is we ourselves who have formed this thing in our minds, and later heard tinkling in the kitchen, and awakened to possibilities so nebulous they resembled blackboard crickets sneezing the color of sleep.

