

The Old Man of the Mountain

by John Olson

I have never danced on the ocean. I have shouted strange epithets at bazaars and christenings. But that was when I was an outlaw and craved the intimacy of mountains. My ascensions were shamelessly aggressive. They were alibis of flagrantly shattered chronology. I needed the testimony of vultures and diamonds. What can I say? I like knobs. I care little for innocence. I prefer the breath of dragons to the silhouettes of apes. There are so many paths, so many elements, so much babble. Intention is clay. It is malleable. History is more like chaos. The stars laugh and laugh and laugh. Is there anything more droll than oblivion? Solitude demands propane. But silence will substitute. Silence will light a room with a soft blue dollar of thought. Blackness heaves itself on the valley and the little lights of the houses beckon. Individuality insults the pageantry of clowns. Vowels have broken their chains of all fact and gauge. I boil with artless abandon. The spoons shrug and brim with nameless flavors. A man dressed in yellow nails the rain to a lascivious ladder. I descend from the mountain. I carry the words of heaven in a wallet of meat and blood. I will no longer attend marriages. I will not harm anyone that does not harm me. I will tread lightly. I will look for grace in all things. And sleep with the bears at the edge of town.

