

Knowing

by lisa rosenblatt

The mountain peaks rise. I don't know the name, but these probably taste like toast with raspberry jam colored flowers catch my eye. The crickets sing. They chirp. They murmur mumble pick up the tempo of the water rushing as the silhouette of a barren tree as struck by the setting sun conducts the chorus.

My skin tingles as the tree moves. She is sketching next to me. She finds an old bucket in the stream and fills it with water. That is all wrong. The bucket — yes — but there is only a bit of water in the bucket — it is not full — and she is not sketching — those are watercolors. She is sitting next to me and I get it all wrong with how she makes her pictures. I am sitting on a moss-covered rock. Although I wanted to say that all that happened, and that it's now this morning, sitting on this rock; I want to say that — but watch me not — making up this story.

Now I've gone and done it. The sweat stomps down my face into my eyes. It stings my eyes. It runs in streams down my forehead flowing into my eyes through the corners. I get lost in the woods. I carry my bike up a steep path and stop in a swamp that makes a glug sound as my foot disappears. I pick up my foot from the sludge and place it on a solid clump of earth and grass, drag my bike a bit up then swing it forward. The path is meant for hikers. I repeat the drag swing with my bike until joining up with a path meant for bikes. I am assured of a way to continue. I follow the path up winding further up into the mountains. The promise of the next exploding view and the rhythmic push on pedals keeps me going. Sometimes the push is all that I know. My shoes are wet. The setting sun falls into the valley. I follow. I ride down a massaging gravel road shaking through my body. The warm windy breeze of a summer's downhill ride presses against my chest as I descend. I stop at a cowshed and hear the rhythmic sweeping of a cowherd cleaning out

the stalls as I put an over-shirt on. The gravel path turns into a road. I ride faster, no brakes into the valley. I do not stop as I still have one more climb to get home. The climb drags out the last of the nausea.

Spring to life I say ... boom. Boom. Dive in there go on go go... and the effort of thought is exhausting. The nausea settles in my mind. I have a nauseous mind. Someone asks — so, what do you do about it? I say, I don't know — what I always do — I don't know — just stuff. I stare at the trees and the mountains on the horizon.

A loudspeaker voice comes from the valley down below. They're having a contest today down there and my tea is cold. I sit with my right leg up on the white iron latticework underneath the table. My left foot rests flat against the stone slabs of the patio. I move both feet up onto the latticework. The dog jumps through the back window. My left foot is back down on the stone slabs. I must go to the toilet. I feel the fullness in my lower body. It is a very definite sign that I must go to the toilet. It is possible to ignore the fullness, but not forever — at some point, I will have to go. I have nothing else left to give as an answer.

I give the dogs some food and go to the toilet. What would you do? Can you tell me? I eat a peach. I rub the fur of the peach on my cheek and then bite in dripping the juice down over the right corner of my mouth, down my bottom lip. I wonder if we really are any different or if — as I think — we're pretty much the same.

Saying that now, sitting on stone slabs on the patio, reduces my nausea. A neighbor stops by and the dogs bark. It is difficult to hear each other. She is going to look for a piece of wood that can be used as a backboard for a basketball hoop. There is construction going on across the street — but not today — today is Sunday. Someone else stops by and I don't know him. I tell him that she is not here, that I'm just looking after the house, and she is not here. If someone were to ask me at this very moment what it is that I'm doing, I could say with all forms of honesty what it is that I'm not. Okay, I will stop

thinking about it and about the inertia of certainty. If my mind does not vomit soon I will probably go for a bike ride. I will cycle up the mountain until sweat pains and pours from every pore of my body and cleanses inside — dragging the nausea out of my skin — for a while. Then, after my ride I will probably be back here again trying to end this story. I come here, to this very spot for a reason. Imagine — the illusion of knowing what is and is not. The contentment drops taste — one could suppose — like that.

