

Mabel Constructed the Quintessential Boundary.

by Meg Worden

Mabel constructed the quintessential boundary. She carefully boiled down her pots and pans, her jewelry, her copper kettle, and the foils from forty six bottles of white pear cider into a silky metallic stew. Mable smeared the mixture onto a burlap dressform - size six and three halves - with the back of a soup ladle till it was good and settled, aerated it with knitting needles and rubbed it with her dead mother's apron till it glistened like the backside of a pufferfish. Mabel aimed to produce a strength and beauty that she hoped would distract and quite literally devastate the insincere.

"I really hope this has the strength and beauty to devastate the insincere," Mable says to her cat who courts the commotion from atop the fridgedaire.

"Prrrrrowl." Says Toulouse.

So Mable went to work, first undressing and then wrangling her body, it's many curves and angles into her newest, armored creation - a dark and tender solitude finally within her grasp.

Fully suited, Mable leans in toward her reflection in the kitchen window. She rests her iron elbow on the sidebar and uses her finger and thumb to sprinkle short slivers of tobacco into a paper. It smells distinctly like sweet pepper, goat cheese and melons.

"Prrrrrowl." Says Toulouse, blinking and blinking again.

Mable's fingers deftly spin the mix into a cigarette and she grins a steel-sword sort of grin at the teflon cat while holding a match to the

stove. Mable sighs when it ignites and Toulouse sits back and purrs, his tabby tail moving on and off of the refrigerator magnet that says "What are you really hungry for?"

What kind of boyfriend gives a refrigerator magnet as a gift, she thinks, holding the flame to the tip of her cigarette and pulling the smoke into her golden lungs.

Mable regards her reflection again, admiring the shocking shards of metal that protrude from her breast in a harmonious pattern, a visual representation of the tumbling humor of Balzac, the exquisite geometrics of a perfectly authentic cadence.

"I won't be fooled again, Toulouse." She says, letting slick silver smoke rings curl from her lips.

