

Fray

by Sean Lovelace

Pulp and *wrack*, for example. She told us certain words were necessary. (When I say *she*, I am of course praying, so I mean J.K. Rowling [on her sable blouse, sliding, bubbling foam of Cola]). I stumbled upon a wet pile of crows, all of them executed, no meat taken, their mouths frozen open, their tiny pink tongues, their yellow eyes staring in dull amazement—that did it for me. I was free. I sought her out, OK? She suggested adverbs. She touched me for a dollar. She said the finest thing would be a natural disaster the morning after every Holiday. Someone set a pig aflame. Grasshoppers and Phosphorus Flowers from the sky. We came to a vast plain filled with car after car, all parked in tidy rows, everything intact, except...not one of them had an engine. The rain curled into a ball. We slipped beneath the chasses, into mascaras of mud. A shiv made from a windshield wiper in my white-knuckled fist. What is all of this? “This?” J.K. Rowling said. “That kind of talk we done with now. You best get ready.” Hoof-beats, the snow of plucked insect wings. Almost beautiful. “And here's another myth,” she hissed into my ear, before nipping the lobe in blood: “That something *else* will happen.”

