

Anhedonia

by Sian Barbara Allen

"When he felt most loved, he felt most _
burdened." Stephen Dobyns

When she loved him she burdened him. She knew he felt a pull but he always resisted it. They went to an old refurbished hotel in Venice and asked if they might see the rooms. They inspected a single room and a double room and thanked the assistant manager for his trouble. He replied that perhaps they would be guests of the hotel someday and they both said perhaps they would. She saw him drift away like the twigs she once dropped into the Merced River in springtime when the falls were full. He looked like a toy man on a toy raft as he left her, but she knew the raft would stay afloat, land him in a safer harbor than she could ever be. All that time they had spent climbing under the hawks flying with the grasses at their knees, on horseback one freezing clear autumn morning seeing the wild foxes, were things he took away with him when he left. She couldn't feel pleasure anymore. The doctors told her this was a disorder called anhedonia which meant all things in life lose their luster; she thought though, that anhedonia was such a pretty word she was convinced it was a flower or a song.

