

Beyond Where I Have Ever Traveled

ALAN SOLDOSKY

for Pamela

You have gone
into the paralyzed sunlight, past the rinds of pastel
apartment houses worn down
in the wake of morning's overcast
to the color of sand

The residents in—
ill-fitting swimsuits and robes—
summer renters like us with only slightly more dignity
than dogs, scratch their flanks
roasted red by yesterday's sun.

There are so many of them
housed so close together—still they semi stunned
to see across their stainless steel coffee mugs another
face tilted slightly away, eyes stained
with the same imprint of sky.

No wonder you wanted
to get away early, before the newspaper racks
announce what is actually befalling this strip
of boulevard cowering like an addict
in a damp sleeping bag beside the ocean.

To stop and ask where anyone
is coming from is forbidden at this time
of the morning before the 737s exit
the catacombs of air to disgorge their human contents
onto this pseudo-tropical shore.

That is why
I wish to God I could keep up with you, love,
as you stride the three miles down the boardwalk
that fronts the beach, like the Pacific's own discarded foreskin,
to a table at the not-yet-too-crowded sidewalk latte shop.

And then walk back,
crusted with the salt of health,

the wind's idiotic intelligence blighting my countenance,
while on a skateboard a shrunken, platinum-haired man in baggy shorts
passes by me, saving the rest of the world.

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