

Lavender Boy

Sage Justice

I met a trapeze artist named Eve when the full moon rose deep
in the navy sky, orange clouds kissing Lake Michigan.
Circles of tamed fire twirled in the air and we danced, feet
traipsing one in front of the other until we tumbled
to the dark dewy grass. She offered me a Pacific Rose.

“It tastes like flowers,” she said. I bit into it, juices
flowing down my throat. Eve’s face, full of folds, spread
into a wrinkly grin. Her seventies had opened the door, holding
marigolds and baby’s breath. We breathed them in deeply
as she asked me what my “real” name was.

My name was a wildflower plucked from the ditch
running along my childhood farm’s edge, living on rainwater,
the chill of the lake effect. I couldn’t expect her to understand.
I told her anyway, my mouth contorting downward as I spoke.
She didn’t tell me how “beautiful” a name it was, just nodded

and chewed on the floral notes it left behind. She told me
I was less like lilies, more like lavender as the menace who came
before me, fought for us he-she’s and she-he’s. As the lake
crashed against the rocks and the moon hung high, I swallowed
whole the blossoms I had tried so hard to renounce.