

Tucumcari

Hard folk

out–here, beyond the Texas line –

Sitting at a coffee counter truck stop in Tucumcari

Carved – wind–torn, burnt faces – jaws fixed

indistinguishable – at last – from the landscape

Hard life waitress, pre–dawn shift –

Balancing a world of plates with two–end jobs

Hard load truckers

Eyes squint into the effortless – eying sun –

Years of searing headlights

curve along the scar–fine strip of blacktop –

crossing the day’s escarpment without decision

Hard, long–forgotten cowboys –

Gone to herding rigs for the pipeline,

beneath their dusty pickup beds

covers a vulnerability waiting:

Waiting for Jesus,

Waiting for the shift to end – waiting

Waiting for the naming at last to cease

or finally, the Pecos to flow –

Windblown Ansel Adams graveyard snapshot passing by –

The young evening streetlight crisp moonrise

The hustle–bustle of two young girls serving smiles for tips at the fish fry

their thoughts all a twirl for high school ballers

an offer of a Friday night –

Thank You, Mam

text: j. sturgeon 2017

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