

Peg Entwistle

Her Jetticks could always be seen in the dark, even as she climbed into the cold breastbone of the Hollywood Hills. It's why she loved them so much; their demand for existence, their inability to disappear. Their worn-in seams had carried her body over the years, over America's canyons, over various important thresholds. They had been wrenched off by the thumbs of impatient lovers and drenched in the ilk of the Pacific Ocean's ornaments. They had always known where she was going long before she did.

Let's go off the road this time, they whispered up to her.

Let's reenact the childhood of Virginia Woolf, collect only the moths attracted to dark. Look how sturdy on raw granite we still are? We'll fight the yellow star thistles and wear them as spurs. We'll keep the gopher snakes away from your pleats and kick you up the scents of sagebrush and night-blooming jasmine. Tonight, you are endemic to Hollywood.

She could always count on them. Their faded color could still ruffle up a reflection of the candlelight from the new moon's dinner parties. Their inch-high heels sowed the Griffith Park ground; a trail of bread crumbs for the seeds of Spanish moss arriving on old wind.

When you get to the top, Peg, take us off, climb up that letter. Tell us what you see.

She put her bare feet on the land.
It was the spine of an ancient dragon's carcass, one she'd slain lifetimes ago.

She climbed the white "H" in the HOLLYWOOD sign, occasionally looking down at the black clouds of chaparral floating on the earth.

We can see up your dress! her Jetticks teased. *Nice hosiery, mon cheri!*

Shhhhh! she teased back. *Everyone knows the coyotes are all drag queens in Los Angeles! They will come and try to wear you if you're not quiet!*

The wind began to move in an unfamiliar way.
Her senses shifted like water striders over ripples.
The ground felt incidental.

For the first time, she shifted her gaze down
at her bare feet, naked and crooked.
Wild and full of sudden language.
She knew they had carried all the secrets of her shoes.
What did they know?

She wanted to know
what it'd be like to get seen in the dark.
To make the first move.

She looked up and out and jumped
into the stars, into the famous
valley of light.

