

FLEDA BROWN

*Chicory*

I worry about the chicory. It's that tinge of pink in the blue, enough to give it a sunset delicacy, even with its tough stalk. It's those fringed, blunt petal-tips. Like my high school Pep Club skirt, pleats sharp as knives, but someone could easily get under it. The road here is crooked, cars fly by at 45 or 50 and never look. I worry about how few walkers there are, how alone nature is, out there sprouting and budding and dying while the invisible Medusa's coil of the human brain talks to itself. Can the utterly unnoticed survive? What about the farthest reaches of the universe, the other solar systems? There's a lot that doesn't seem to need us, but everything's contingent. The negative space around the flower is what shapes the flower, so the neglect of such a powerful mind as ours must collapse its bloom at least a little. There's so much reciprocity necessary to exist: we actually exchange bits of DNA with those we catch diseases from. The germs travel to our lymph nodes, carrying a bit of our infector: we literally become our enemies. The quality of our existence is that delicate, held up by narrative, the stem. The chicory is part of my walk, part of the road, part of the roadside, its blue slightly different from the sky, and so on. It invents itself out of all this weaving. This is what I want to say, that there are so many frayed ends.