

## Three Poems · *Joshua Clover*

### THE NEVADA GLASSWORKS

4CC

Ka-Boom! They're making glass in Nevada!  
Figure August, 1953,  
mom's 13, it's hot as a simile.  
Ker-Pow! Transmutation in Nevada!  
Imagine mom: pre-PostModern new teen,  
innocent for Elvis, ditto "Korean  
conflict," John Paul George Ringo Viet Nam.  
Mom's 1 state west of the glassworks, she's  
in a tree / K\*I\*S\*S\*I\*N\*G,  
lurid cartoon-colored kisses. Ka-Blam!  
They're blowing peacock-tinted New World glass  
in southern Nevada, the alchemists  
& architects of mom's duck-&-cover  
adolescence, they're making Las Vegas  
turn to gold—real neon gold—in the blast  
furnace heat that reaches clear to Clover  
Ranch in dry Central Valley: O the dust—  
It is the Golden State! O the landscape—  
dreaming of James Dean! O mom in a tree  
close-range kissing as in Nevada just  
now they're making crazy ground-zero shapes  
of radiant see-through geography.  
What timing! What kisses! What a fever  
this day's become, humming hundred degree  
California afternoon that she's  
sure she could never duplicate, *never*,  
she feels transparent, gone—isn't this heat  
suffocating?—no, she forgot to breathe  
for a flash while in the Nevada flats  
factory glassblowers exhale . . . exhale . . .  
a philosopher's stone, a crystal ball,

a spectacular machine. Hooray! Hats  
off—they're making a window in the sand!  
Mom's in the tree—picture this—all alone!  
Unforgettable kisses, comic book  
mnemonic kisses, O something's coming  
out of the ranch road heat mirage. That drone—  
an engine? Mom quits practice & looks  
east, cups an ear to the beloved humming,  
the hazy gold dust kicked wildly west  
ahead of something almost . . . in . . . sight. Vroom!  
It's the Future, hot like nothing else, dressed  
as a sonic-boom Cadillac. O mom!  
This land *is* your land/This land Amnesia—  
they're dropping some new science out there,  
a picture-perfect hole blown clear to Asia:  
everything in the desert—Shazam!—turns  
to glass, gold glass, a picture-window where  
the bomb-dead kids are burned & burn & burn

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No matter how far we back away from ourselves  
this scene will not reveal itself as a movie set.  
Not the low building not the couple meeting out front  
& not the desk clerk who is sick of it all.  
The sign flashing dirty green/pink/off & on again  
eludes through its perfectness—a dull trick—  
the possibility of being a propmaster's deceit.  
STOP HERE / X-L MOTEL / STOP HERE.  
Because this is all there is to know  
we know that someone here is desperate.