ambiguos

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and gripped it tighter. He was going to take the whole damn thing, and find her, wherever she was, in that place where her hands weren’t curled in and her smile was flawed, beautiful and wide again. She was going to uncurl those fists and reach out to him, and wrap those arms around him, and whisper in his ear, “I need more apples.”

As he contemplated unscrewing the childproof lid, a glimmer in the surf caught his eye. Forcing his stiff legs forward, he worked his way into the edge of the wet foam and bent to find a penny rolling with the heartbeat of the water. He lifted it from its watery grave in his wrinkled hands. It sat in the late sun among a palm of sand and shone, cleansed by salt.

Robert remembered then the first time he was on this beach fifty-five years previous, and it was with her. He had kept an old and corroded penny in his pocket for as long as he could remember then, and was convinced that it was lucky after years of victorious baseball games and passed tests. He remembered Lily’s hair, long and dark, embraced by the wind and reaching back to it in an erotic dance, while the sun had leant down with its bright ribbons to crown her his queen. He was poor then and had reached into his pocket and fingered his lucky penny on this evening when he needed luck the most. He had uncurled her delicate hand and placed that penny in her palm, saying, “I’m not rich now, but someday I will be, and I will give you everything that you deserve if you will be my wife. I will make you the most wealthy woman in the world and work to make all of your dreams come true.” Lily had thrown her head back in her way and laughed. Its sound bounced of the sun and hit the water, only to make its way back to his forever-young heart. “I don’t need money; I just want you to feed me apple sauce and read me books when I’m old and can’t do it myself.”

Robert dropped the bottle, pocketed the penny, determined to give it to his grandson, and walked back to his car. The “empty” sign wasn’t flashing on the parking meter anymore. Someone had bought him some time.

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ambiguous

Kristine Anderson

—please understand—

pressing through the muck of my foul life
muscles stacking my back up
are straining for the oxygen
that was one time given without reserve.

my toes digging, so fiercely,
to the common ground beneath
the mortal which pends on
their breath – their dance.

am I nothing that I am incapable
to advance my hunched over position…
but just enough that I am not impelled
by this impenetrable substance
back to before my awakening, before my present?

this present opening has caused me to implore, petition
why am I pressing?
can I not walk through and prostrate
to the gods on the other side?