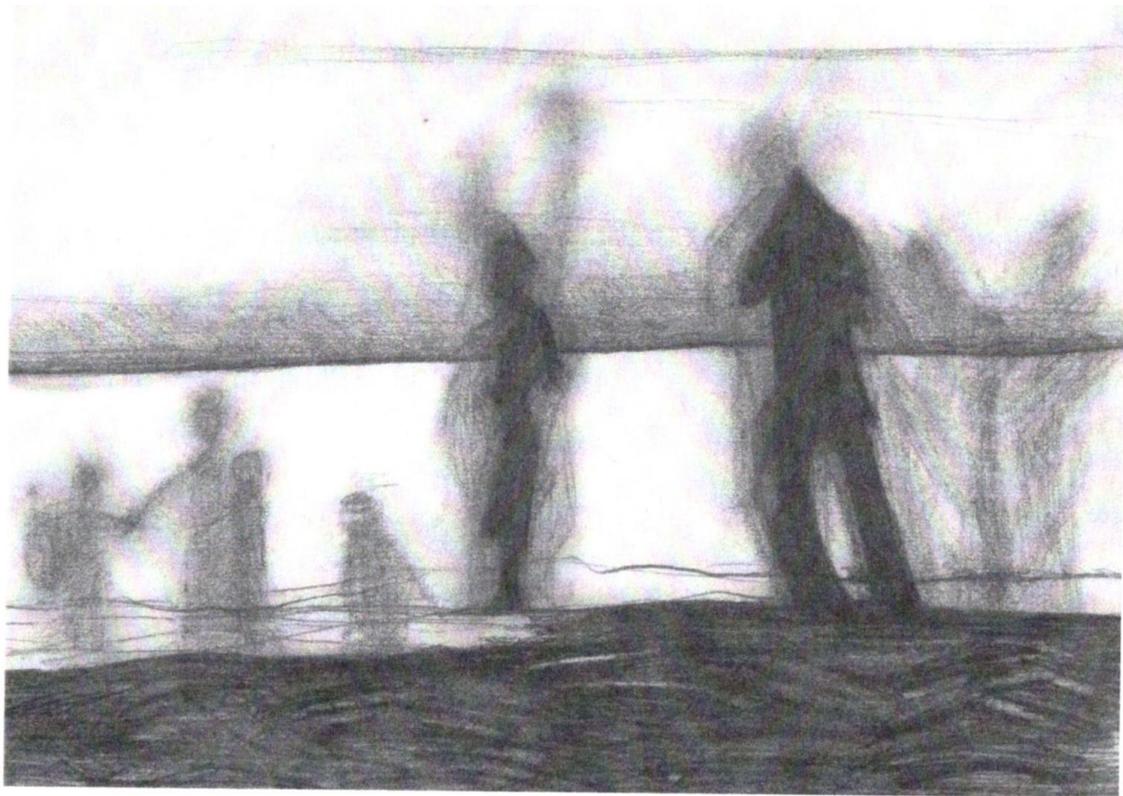


Indulgences

Holly Heflen



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Give fate a chance

We are none of us immune to fate's plan.
The river would just as soon give you all
It's fish than drown you in its icy brine.

Betting your brains to beat the band, and you
There's nothing like death to settle your hash

It's like skidding on black ice, or like how
lightning never strikes the same place twice

or how your heart stops since you smoke a pack
a day. You chose for it to end that way.

Neither diligence nor carelessness help.
There is not much you can do to change it.
So take it, fake it, you'll never make it.

Glamping (glamor camping)

I.

My family, we cautiously pine for a time of more strictness, to eat only what we grow or gather or what is in the cooler.

Practicing for the future off the grid. Pretending I am filthy rich, not just filthy.

Imagine outside is part of my house and I use it a lot and I take it for granted.

Forced to notice every tiny thing, entertained all day with the flashing of leaves, funny how it does not feel like boredom anymore.

II.

Drape damp clothing to dry, slumped like used tea bags on small bushes. Then I am a nudist exposed to the cliffs and the world; daylight reaching new places where the sun don't shine, the air blows all over of me. I wish everyone could be naked.

I am an aboriginal bushman surviving the blazing sun. Not gourds collecting dew, but water bottles.

I am in the sweltering jungle gazing at a luscious rainforest tree canopy, no monkeys, just little birds.

I am primitive, hunting and grunting a lot. The ancient woman in me discovers the wheel, invents fire, and with rope, I create levers and pulleys...

I am a pioneer, trailblazing and homesteading, carrying buckets of water ridiculous distances.

I am homeless, but positive and resourceful.

III.

My young companion asks, "How long can we stay?" How long can we remain contented and wild? And how many luxuries can we not live without?

"Do I have a sunburn?" she needs to know, and yes, she does. On the water's edge, she plays quietly.

The evening shadow creeps east across the river and us. Across the rocks and tall white

trees. Across the small fake beaches, small and muddy streams, up the mountain approach treetops. And I bargain: "When the shadows reach the top...that's bedtime!"

With firewood, she built a "safety barrier" between her and the fire, gently prodding the flames with a stick, wearing her polyester pajamas. I told her she is my careful fool.

The tall heightening shadows expand and envelope each other and tiptoes through for about ten minutes. Then it gets dark, then darker. Ten by ten, thousands upon thousands of planets and stars appear. Lulled to sleep by high ways of nature not a distant highway.

IV.

Venture just a little further each time we go to get the woods, firewood or driftwood, or Hollywood. (I drive a few minutes toward civilization to get any reception on my phone.)

Not too many bugs; we have sprays for that. Not too much sun, not too much fun; we have sprays for that.

The poorest in me eats every morsel we have, gleefully. It tastes better and is more filling than any other. I am so grateful and fat. (America did that.) Well-fed homeless people sleep under the stars.

As it gets hotter go jump in the water. You do not have to work now to make ends meet. But a true pioneer toils all day in that heat; that same daily heat. Except now, it is hotter because of global warming. You should have recycled.

Many supplies come out even, running out of marshmallows and other essentials at similar times. Two birds, baby, two birds.

Indulgences

My indulgences: driving

To nowhere and then driving back to town

good coffee and a cigarette or two.

Peel me a grape like Queen Cleopatra.

Take a long nap watching Homer at home.
When my baby says, "Mama, scratch my back."

I can only wear natural fiber clothes
Wool, or Cashmere, or cotton, or contempt
To appease princess-and-the-pea syndrome.
Rub my feet on loose-knit layers at night
Even blankets stitched in fear give me warmth.

Splendidly stoned while carving a stone
With my chisels, my rasps, and sandpapers.
I'm cracking life's glitches

Enjoy appearing smart, proving folks wrong
Which doesn't display how clever I can be.
Paintbrushes splashed in tears can make great works.

I choose not to clean and I hate the mess.
Nothing like clutter to trigger my stress.
Though I tend to be allergic to them,
Even flowers planted in anger bloom.

I'll salvage your junk (The scrap wood Poem)

You collected every piece of wood you ever saw

On the side of the road with big plans.
Too big for you to even start.
Your structures and life in shreds.
Your planks are in shatters, your boards in ruins, and scattered all over the dirt.
But I have gloves, and I'll pick them up.
I'll throw your bad luck in the back of my truck.
Your burdens, your burn pile are just what I need.
The strips of wishful thinking are mine to create a space we can use.
You waited too long to do it yourself, your ideas but scraps.
They are not scraps that build walls,
Though splinters they may be.
Walk heavy on our floor.
Lean back far in the corner, wait under the roof.
Have long life in this space.
And give me room to work.
I can finish what you started with what I have and with what I have taken from you.

This is why we can't have nice things

*I need your shoveling to be more of
a soil-skimming and less of a holing. We are just removing the top few inches.
I need your coffee-ing to be more of
a dripping and sipping and less of a sludgeing.
I need your showering to be more of
a sudsing and sprinkling and less flooding and sopping, or again you're mopping.*

She wishes taking none of my advice, but her
allotted days of avoidance have expired.

Over the stove I slave, stay, and delay another day
For her waist, for her to waste the food I cook but
I can surely boast some of the best compost.

*I need your TV watching to be more of
a culturing and less of a zombie-ing.*

*I need your dinner eating to be more of
a salad-ing and less of a sugar-coated candying.*

Beware of broccoli and careful of carrots,

I need you to eat more vegetables and give me peace and quiet, please.

When her graceless face invades my sacred space and
Her murmured and mumbled acceptance is too much for me,
Her tongue-bomb to my aplomb,
I flee to my truck and to building structures as to an old friend who is holding.

The hills softly abreast with light lupin blue.
Winter is done and dusted, but that final thaw
Cannot be trusted and knits my brows as
Her treacle repeats and repeats in my thoughts
And I will always return home, with no pride
Save for what's saved deep, deep inside.

Is this a test?

It's no contest,

Should have devoured my young for the good of the nest.