

STOPPING IN THE DESERT ALONE

Did I drive 1200 miles just to sit here staring
at my sweaty hands on the wheel? To memorize
the livid veins like ruckled roads crossing
hot desolation heading deeper into the interior?
The interior is what I'm running from--

nothing inside worth keeping-- mucked up
with misbegotten cells and superchemicals
that don't know good from bad. Sitting here,
slashed and burned, poisoned for dessert, myself
a damaged ecosystem-- more of a desert than this.

I'm no longer afraid, just dried up. Mumbling
to whoever still lives inside, pretending
to still be a woman, not just an animated logogram
for ignorance posing as medical prowess. When I die
the docs will finger their beards and say:

"A shame it didn't work this time. Maybe
we'll hit the right combo next time."
And next time is already sitting
in their waiting rooms filling out the forms,
preludes to filling coffers and coffins equally.

Cut the commentary, girl, you're not the type.
Some patients get lucky; maybe you will.
Listen, if you've got a few months,
why spend 'em driving? You can still dance, dammit.
You could adagio with that dust devil out there,

what's left of your hair standing straight up--
grit to grind your teeth on for a soft-shoe number--
grit to sting you pink and alive, to sand
your scars smooth and touchable as rosewood.
Enough grit to get you back on point like a stylus.

Look at that wild thing dervish around the cactus:
secret rhythms-- slow spins-- winding down now--
naively graceful. You could choreograph that. Could it
lift you like a ballet partner? Is it strong enough?
If you cover your eyes and nose could it hurt you?

Actually-- could anything?