2001

Sustaining This Massive Shade

James Thomas Stevens

Follow this and additional works at: http://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.5370

This Content is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.
Sustaining This Massive Shade

1.
Of all that is left to occur
when nothing moves
but beneath my skull
a dog stretching tremulous forelegs.
Cicadas drone in every tendon
while the wind offers nothing
to keep insects from the skin.
And still he returns
like a new leaf reviving.

In sum, what nightfall has in store.

I keep four calendars he said.

Beneath one moon

Of all that touches him,
the rain that doesn’t fall
and the woman that lies next to him.
In this age of hands,
where are mine.
I am intact and I don’t care.

My hands in the garden.
Corn bleached
and malformed by drought
beneath the sick of blue.

2.
I have the white-blue eyes of my ancestors he said,
their narrow skull and their clumsiness in fighting.

Fighting to keep my hand from his belly
where sleeps a double sex.
Struggling not to touch
the small bones held in by sandals,  
I take note of his every step.

Given confidence  
and confiding in the agave.  
The cactus mourns the memory of feeling  
and mysterious delicacies seduce me.

That this night would give up  
one breath  
to stir the downy hairs on his golden legs.  
The skin that aches  
for want of feather.

3.  
How I move between rooms,  
the cattle of longing  
and think only of that curve  
at the base of his skull.

The cowlick clipped  
to a choirboy’s mean halo.

I am happy he said.  
I am jealous.

Of the planets  
that seduce him with greater success  
and the moon that lights his pale arm  
when he rises in the night.

Walk through the night, gently moving that thigh, that second thigh  
and that left leg.