

Andante

Ellen Kartchner

After your letter, I hoped to translate,
if I could, apples and bread into dark open streets.
That girl in Heidelberg drew a black line,
white paper against the shed door,
drawing that night into a curve,
and it was working so far:
closure over the fields, closure seeping
through the cars. The man across the aisle
leaned into the open window, trees in rhythm
of threes, of fives, as in a time songs will start
sufficing again; a door opens into an open
window onto open light, white space.

After your letter, I heard the train
weld the long, slow fixtures of towns,
and it's been like this—
a long, serious connection,
as when your mother
waited the seams between trains,
the ease of late-night cigarette haze
over your body, over your clothes, over
your eyes as you slept.
White birds sift through the dream

ELLEN KARTCHNER, a southern Arizona native, is currently in her second year of study with the Iowa Writers' Workshop and the four seasons. Her work has recently appeared in Sunstone.

and I recognize them, hearing
saxophone in the early morning heat:
how it is, God's gait over the world, how
it fractures into song. In Amsterdam
the Chinese men gambled, blue motion
under the lamps: faith. And I've seen,
in the gutting back home,
the callow, yellow, opaque organs as entire
and not without cause, blood smeared
like memory in the ribcage.

What keeps me close to mine?
A month of November.
Sun over, moon over you.