

W.F. LANTRY

Explication de Texte

She said, “I carry you with me
through my day.” Forget her eyes
for a moment, William,
and think on what she may
have meant. You’re such
a bad listener, always considering
ankles and such, or metaphysical
explanations. Forget the hum
of that voice, or the way her face
almost glows when she hears
certain chords and sees
you watching her.

Perhaps she meant she carries on
a conversation when you’re apart,
sees something unusual and means
to tell you, or thinks on what she said,
how you responded, what she might have heard.
Perhaps she whispers to you in the darkness
words she cannot remember at dawn.

Or maybe she meant she carries
your taste on her lips through the day,
can still feel the touch of your hand on her fingers
hours later, can still see your eyes
as you see hers continually, or remembers
some almost delicate trace of her outlined
shoulder, or some imagined hint of you
inside her hips.

You don’t believe it means she has
some part of you with her, a few strands
of gathered hair, a folded leaf
of paper you wrote on, a tiny ornament
you kept close at hand on your desk,
or a few eight-petalled flowers
taken in the early darkness
from your autumn garden.

More likely it means she carries you
as the sea may be said to carry the Pacific sky,
touching at every moment, filling in
between each swell, even at moments becoming one
in the cresting foam of waves, behind the tern’s wing
when the dawn is just coming up
and the world seems ancient and new.

W.F. Lantry, a native of San Diego, California, received his *licence* and master’s degree from the Nice University Sophia Antipolis in Nice, France, and his PhD in creative writing from the University of Houston. His poetry collections are *The Structure of Desire* (Little Red Tree Publishing, 2012), winner of a 2013 Nautilus Book Award in Poetry; a chapbook, *The Language of Birds* (Finishing Line Press, 2011); and a forthcoming collection, *The Book of Maps*. Recent honors include the National Hackney Literary Award in Poetry, CutBank Patricia Goedicke Prize in Poetry, Crucible Editors’ Poetry Prize, Lindberg Foundation’s International Poetry for Peace Prize (in Israel), and in 2012 the LaNelle Daniel and Potomac Review Prizes. His work has appeared widely in print and online, in journals such as the *Wallace Stevens Journal*, *Valparaiso Fiction Review*, *Cha*, *Descant*, *Gulf Coast*, and *Aesthetica*. He currently works in Washington, D.C., and is an associate fiction editor at *JMWW*.

JUDY MENSCH

Memory 3, 2011
Photo etching and drypoint, 7 7/8 x 17 7/8 in



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