

## OF THINGS TANGIBLE

To find you, I walk backwards among my memorabilia. In the photo album, you sit, polaroid perched, ill planted, on my mother's floral couch. Five dollar sunglasses shield green eyes that do not fade with recollection. Of things viable, of things tangible, that is all.

And the story goes. At Christ's crucifixion, the gypsy blacksmith asked to forge the nails refused. Thereafter, the homme, the gypsy were offered, were given carte blanche to roam, to pilfer without recriminations.

The handbill reads: Mrs. Rose, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Smith, will tarot, will reveal lucky numbers, will reverse the evil eye, will remove bad luck. And this God gifted psychic reader and advisor will restore lost nature. *Just bury your money under the thirsty soil. Bury your money in the moonlight. Just tell us where you bury the money. It will multiply.*

And I walk backwards. To cancer and we caravan to Canada to bury your father,  
where the gods of anger, hail and thunder, never stopped raining bullets on his coffin.  
And we had no bank accounts. You were what you had; you were what you wore; as the gypsy women gathered between the flash

of coin and cash; blue hues, brassy, wild patterns, silver rings, the old homni, steel gypsies, the scent of Leviticus whispering, scarves, kerchiefs, *diklos* covering their heads, sleeves covering their numbered wrist tattoos, serving the menfolk first, separate.

*Monti mai, when it is your montblies, dirty, you understand unclean, gadji?*

*No cook,*

*No, wash that separately from the mens.*

The homni, the gadji, the gypsy parties, the gold bangles rising to fall, the room a vibration of murmurs. *The white she is not one of us.*

*What can she do; can't she sell flowers?* Your mother, and you, carny wondrous showman that you were finger magic at the Walmart, stolen plastic foliage and me crying at the night club selling bad; fake corsages saturated in eau de any scent available.

In Ohio, where you were restless, where I enrolled in college, where I furnished the apartment in antiques, and oriental rugs.

where I made a home; where you were restless; where your criminal cousin had to stand in front of the Kris, the shaming council of gypsies where *Gypsies don't steal from Gypsies; where there is honor among thieves; where, he is no longer one of us;*

where I bought a snow white pair of Nike wings; where I flew one foot in front of another, miles around the leaning trees, parks and pavements, where the branches bent homage and

acknowledgements. I remember; the sweat draws a corkscrew pattern down your cheek and you are restless, speaking of Georgia, speaking of Florida, speaking of Canada.

And I walk backwards until I am running.

The flight of gravel beneath my feet surprises me and you are speaking as I round the park, the words, I am beyond the restless trees, the Oak, the Sycamore leaves falling from your lips in brittle succession.