

The Revelation

By Lucia Perillo

I hit Tonopah at sunset,
just when the billboards advertising the
legal brothels
turn dun-colored as the sun lies
down behind the strip mine.

And the whores were in the Safeway,
buying frozen foods and Cokes
for the sitters before their evening shifts.
Yes they gave excuses to cut
ahead of me in line, probably wrote bad
checks,
but still they were lovely at that hour,
their hair newly washed
and raveling. If you follow
any of the fallen far enough
—the idolaters, the thieves and liars—
you will find that beauty, a cataclysmic
beauty rising off the face of the burning
landscape
just before the appearance of the beast,
the beauty
that is the flower of our dying into
another life.

Like a Möbius strip: you go round once
and you come out on the other side.
There is no alpha, no omega,
no beginning and no end.
Only the ceaseless swell
and fall of sunlight on those rusted hills.
Watch the way brilliance turns
on darkness. How can any of us be
damned.

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