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Para Me

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Para Me

James Pence

I
climb the little rise watching for rattlers,
zigging and zagging around the mesquite's bushy raggedness
and the reaching nails of olive cactus fingers,
the earth crunching and grating against my boots, dry as a fresh litter box.
The southern horizon flashes white of light toward
the desert floor and swears booming oaths of rage.
Punishing electrical fists pummel
the arching distant backs of the knotted mountains.
The distant storm
in my soul
seeks to join the rising winds and fly to the thunderhead's call.
I want
an untamed adventure to call me with irresistible power,
excusing me from my mundane and necessary existence,
enticing me
with foreign whispers and black hair,
mountains of pine and snaking roads,
tumbling cascades sending cool mists to my sunbaked face,
deserts blooming with crimson and canary,
tangerine and turquoise;
vistas unstoppable horizon to horizon.
I long
to hear the phone ring on a sandy cabana table
heaped with silly tropical toothpick umbrellas.
"Bueno," I answer,
breathless from my late jog on the cooling Pacific sands.
I yearn
to walk in plazas paved with stones older than my great-great grandfather,
my thirsty soul drinking in the bronze faces, kaleidoscope dresses,
callused barefoot urchins and soaring cathedral towers.

I want
to feel the wet embrace of verdant jungle,
hear the screeching gossip of toucan to macaw,
smell the ripe perfume of exotic blossom and humid earth,
taste the sweet-soft flesh of dripping fruit.
My feet desperate
to be cooled on a hot afternoon by a cajoling shoeshine man
sprinkling water on my dusty boots, polishing the scraped charcoal leather to a reborn ebony.
I want
to smell the sweat born of sunshine and grit,
of work done on sidewalks of broken paving stones,
hawking rainbow paper flowers and
empty piñatas waiting to be stuffed for giggling children.
I crave
the taste of husky field corn roasted on piñon coals,
dusted with red chile fire.
I seek
vast waving plains of grass
where,
urging my mount to an ever churning gallop,
I can ascend the wind.
I sigh, touch boot sole to loose earth and slowly descend the small rise,
measuring the distance, pace by pace, to my car.
I watch the rearview mirror as the distant sun
trickles into the pool
of
night.