

A Thousand Birds

Poetry by JodiAnn Stevenson

Quell in us the desire to strike out on any ridiculous crusade. For we have done so often and suffered. The names of each battle, the tallied dead are etched in echo inside of us. We have been drinking again. We would start out as if to change the world and end up wavering, our position unsteady because we wanted things. And not just things but Love and Passion. We remember the hair of the girl who careened over us, whose face flew up in ecstasy like a thousand birds. That moment tasted like roses. Love and Passion: We've beheaded them both in the square. We've called them out of their homes and exiled them to that ancient dungeon at the edge of the city. Our mouths are full of petals. We miss the girl though we are no longer allowed by law to say the word or speak her name. She went down into the valley and never came up. She went deep into the pale sky, the careless clouds around our home and we never found her again. Let us not lose any others. Let us stay on our barstools. Later, we will bury our weapons deep in the ground.