



Facial Recognition

The real truth is that some of us don't have facial recognition, unable to recall the goblet of a face. Then, we think of rain falling so sparsely from the gutters that we wonder if it is rain, especially if the face is bunched with three pointed leaves skimming across a pond. The attempt to recognize begins with the quick look across the cheekbones, so muddled with a dirt caramel and studded goldfish color, like this woman who stands in front of a window casement chalk cradle white. Then we identify the strip of the nose, the soft mouth summing up a sound, but it's useless. We have no ability to even make a forensic analysis of her face, much less her cauterized eyebrow. Her face is plaited with leaves and petals; there's even a third eye off in its placement—but but, still, all these clues and she's still unrecalled.

What's worse, there's a bird-sniffing revenant, or ghost, or maybe just her own shadow behind her, leavening its reclusive smoky compost. I look at her, and think if a stranger looked at my face, as I am glossing over hers, would they see the morning birds that I listen for each a.m., how I look for anything turning over even in a pallid wind, or how my body stands in silence at the bathroom window where I can get a better view of wind tailings: especially the dark sharp-shinned hawk, eyeing the casement that I linger by, wanting out of the rainfall. I move to the side, hoping the crush of leaves will disguise my looking. It sidles up, giving me another way to look at a face, my face, wanting. When I first saw the hawk's loose-filled feathers, I thought I saw my own self. Keep looking, I want to tell her. Keep deciphering, the face will become clearer, and the image will return to you. Just say hello.