

In the Nostalgia Chair

by Matthew Murrey



Image: "Kandinsky's Slippers" by Denise Zygadlo. "In the Nostalgia Chair" was written by Matthew Murrey for *Rattle's* Ekphrastic Challenge, April 2019, and selected as the Artist's Choice.

I unfold Florida
days when I had my first
apartment, when I plugged in
a second-hand record player
and listened to my life.
It was small town, good
walking in the waking
morning while the sun
reinvented the horizon,
good night strolls
where stars kept track
above wires leaves and moss
and churches were dark
empty, unlocked, and holy.
We had some times:
that night of wine, that morning
of coffee and rain. One time
we smoked and couldn't stop
laughing after we'd stared
at each other until you said
"I'm not feeling it."

And when I was alone
and holy, nights were for falling,
Look Homeward Angel, asleep.
That was a different state,
a thousand novels ago. It's a lie
to say I never looked back.
I still think about Keith Jarett
and the radio in the kitchen
and a bridge over a brown river
and a red-brick train station
and an afternoon of blue
thunder and broken branches.
Remember how the blinds
divvied up beauty on the wall
near the end of so many days,
and how green the world was
when we opened them? They
have fallen apart, like lovers,
like the loafers I wore when you left,
the ones, I'm sorry to say,
I threw away a long time ago.