



# Time Travel

by Alida Rol



We served our sentence  
under the city's insomniac glare,  
by the racket of garbage trucks  
and the screams of all-night sirens,  
racked up paychecks and overtime  
to the smell of pissed-on  
asphalt baked in swampy heat.  
After the punishment  
of never alone but too often  
lonely, we left for the country, took  
custody of a glowering sky,  
the withering glances of bare trees,  
a house full of dust and  
crumbled hope. We  
have no idea what to do  
with the silos, their stern  
concrete, or how we'll feed  
the sheep in snow. Feral cats  
possess the outbuilding, so we've kept  
its one door closed. When a pair  
of cow-eyed Herefords, the docile  
bulk of them, stares at us  
like aliens, we understand  
we are. We gawk in awe  
at their foreignness and  
see ourselves. Tonight  
we make love in the barn  
despite the dark, our animal  
scent in the air, ears already  
callousing to the growl  
of planes overhead. Contrails  
spike our dreams, but we vow  
by day to tread a gentler and less  
breathless path. We will warm  
to the neighbors despite  
their reminders that Herefords  
are raised for slaughter. Come  
spring we'll spin our wool, bring  
the neighbors fresh laid  
eggs, tomatoes in the summer.  
We will often be alone.

Image: "Restricted | U.S. Air Force" by B.A. Van Sise from his "Elsewhere" series. "Time Travel" was written by Alida Rol for *Rattle's* Ekphrastic Challenge, July 2019, and selected as the Artist's Choice.