

## Pedestrian Circus

On the Broadway and Possum Point corner, the cage stands like a truck, parked for the pedestrian circus. The plaque says BEHOLD, THE GOD OF TENNIS, CAPTURED IN SANTA BARBARA. The man inside is naked, and his hair is nets. He has a racquet for a dick. He sits on a bed of hay, reading *A Little Life*. As I walk by, he looks up and says, “Hello, pedestrian. How are you feeling?” I stop my walking. “I am feeling sympathetic,” I say to the tennis god, “I am feeling sympathy for you.” The naked deity puts down his book, “But why would you feel sympathy for me?” “Because you are a captive,” I say, “and you are reading a very sad book.” “Ah,” he says. “I find the capability for sympathy to be a very sexy quality in a man.” I nod in agreement, and he says, “Would you like to join me?” He opens his cage, which has been unlocked the whole time, and I join him on his bed of hay. He begins to caress my face as I stare into his very eyes. “You are very lovely,” I tell him. “Thank you,” he says, and we stay like this for many nights, until the circus is called to the next town. As I begin to leave the cage, he stops me. “Sometimes,” he begins, then abruptly stops for what could only be a sense of embarrassment. “Please, say how you feel,” I tell him. “We only have a moment.” He nods and leans in to whisper. His breath is strong, like pesticide, and sweet as a picnic. “Sometimes,” he begins again, “sometimes I forget worms exist.”

# In the Greenhouse of Ambiguous Time

the geranium that smells like peppercorn says to the gardener, “How long have we been here?” The gardener replies, “Sometimes, it feels as if we’ve been here for an absurd number of decades.” “I agree,” says the geranium. “At other times,” continues the gardener, “it feels as if we’ve only been here for a few identical days.” “Yes,” says the geranium, “like those days between Christmas and New Year.” The gardener claps his hands in the air, “Exactly! Just like those days.” The two friends share an immeasurable moment of silence.

Despite his questions of time, the gardener gives thanks for having a plant capable of such astute comparisons for company. The geranium reads an article about physician-assisted suicide, considers having a Diet Coke. “What time do you suppose it is?” asks the geranium. The gardener looks at his broken watch, “I’m not sure, but it feels a little after midnight.” “Oh,” says the geranium as he wraps a scarf around his cold body, “well Happy New Year, gardener.” The gardener bends down and kisses one of the geranium’s scented leaves, “Happy New Year, my aromatic friend.”