

# The Tallgrass Shuffles

Sea Sharp

last night the wind said  
be careful girl the  
moon be watching

said keep your fingers  
out the mud keep your tongue  
in your head said the moon

is watching you said she'll pull  
you apart like the tide  
when your time comes girl

rip out your womb like a second heart  
drag it on the asphalt like roadkill  
said you smell like roadkill

you taste like shit girl  
said be careful the moon be  
watching and she gone be mad

she gone tie you to the shed 'cause you  
ain't primp enough for no ribbons girl  
you ain't show girl you ain't top breed

you ain't pedigree girl  
down girl bad girl sit girl  
bangbang dead girl going

going sold just like that girl  
the moon be watching so slow  
down child said be still girl

said quit that noise  
said stop that shine  
said shuck that corn

girl she seen you bust the limestones brittle  
do the tallgrass shuffles like dance moves  
like prairie inferno hopscotch like shoooo

said ooooh girl stop playing  
now smooth down your dress  
and fold up your tail

and zip shut that grin  
and pin back your ears  
said the moon be watching you

said be careful said  
swoosh and such said  
heel girl said stay girl said die girl

# Journey of the Midwestern Queen

Sea Sharp

I.

It is forbidden to acknowledge this kind of science in classrooms,  
to speak of the rainbow like this, to encourage  
insanity, but don't be fooled by their arches.  
They are fully circular in shape, chronic bands and rings,  
half exposed in the sky, half hiding underground,  
like ostrich heads in sand, like so many people  
in a sultry wardrobe.

II.

When the Queen is asked to leave the homestead,  
she will ask for time to pack her cases, to brush the horses.  
She will paint her nails, pinch her mother's favorite pearls and leave  
her muddy boots in the bathtub.

She will remember to kneel before the altar  
of her granny, reciting a final litany.

III.

Tonight at six, Pastor Simmons will pray  
for the damnation of our souls, live on Channel 4 television.  
He will tell all 200 people in his congregation and 300 viewers at home  
to bow their heads, and clasp their hands, and beg for the Lightning  
of the Terrible to strike down boys like us. And this is why we go  
extinct in these towns, afraid of all the rain and the rumble.

#### IV.

After the Great Flood, God gave Noah  
an apology: a flag with a stripe for every tribe of love.  
He called the first band “Agape”...

#### V.

When the Queen reaches the city, her people  
will be waiting like it is a prophecy, like she  
is their Queer Messiah. She will call them  
The Family. They will straighten  
her hair, bedazzle her heels. There will be a parade  
then a festival. Some will camp out, pitch tents, vogue.  
Some will feel the fever in the streets, bend over the trunks  
of abandoned cars, while many more will revel in their own  
normalcy. They will hold their children close and promise  
to love them always and always, Amen.

#### VI.

When she wakes up on Sunday mornings,  
a smeared and glittered mess spread over her man’s lovely  
chest, the Queen will think: Maybe it is possible  
to live happily after all.

#### VII.

Sometimes it takes years to realize  
that God never left the farm. He is still sitting there,  
next to the remote control on that coffee table back home.  
Like so many other loved books, there  
to pass the time, he will wait eternity for you  
to just “come on up to the house.”

**Sea Sharp** is a vegan, self-proclaimed “refugee of Kansas,” and resident of Great Britain. Sharp is a graduate of Kansas State University with recent work appearing in *Flyover Country Review* and *NEAT*. Sharp enjoys “sensible amounts” of scotch and dancing with a hula hoop.