

Second

Luke Sawczak

There are sixty of her in a minute.
Eighteen, nineteen, she smokes hand-rolled cigarettes
in Paris and worships a lost man.
His life began again when his sister,
an only child for fifteen years,
announced she wasn't really gay and got married.
Then he organized for Occupy.

Second watches the Seine from an artist's apartment:
images of Christ, circle mirrors, exposed rafters,
hands reaching out from walls to take your coat, tortilla ceiling.
The mess flows from her parents in Uzbekistan
who express their love in winter coats she gives away.
She wears her father's T-shirt full of holes,
packed now for her departure, and she smokes.

Second sits in the window alcove,
listens to us talking with her tired hero.
She is so young: still goes through phases.
When older, every word becomes a phase.
Her mind is simple as a blade, and inspired I show her
a nineteenth-century sketch *Morse et lion-marin*.
When an artist towed icebergs to G8 he lost her love,
he murdered icebergs.

I'm turning over cassettes labelled *Ocarina*, *Ocarina 2*
in smudgy handwriting. She accepted an invitation to Borneo
without a moment's hesitation.
She bet we couldn't find it on the map.

I don't know who she'll be tomorrow,
only that she recalls the raven's feather that I dropped
once in cold Canadian snow, looking for a way to die.

I don't want to be with her, but to be her.
Why do people love the Seine if they can't swim?
It seems to me a river should serve some purpose,
not just be looked at, sailed on, bid adieu to.

The orphan takes the world's energy from place to place,
starstruck by our every sad disappearing boy gone bright,
who drinks, smokes, laughs on a Parisian porch, produces art,
and fades again into the soil of the isle.