

by Lilace Mellin Guignard

APOLOGY AND RETRACTION

1.

It's not the sex I miss so much, as the easy way
involvement blinds me to larger problems.

Something in the aftermath of loving
can make *global warming* sound pleasant,
like a gentle promise.

I call my friend in the San Gabriels to say
this one fell through too. She complains
that last night a stranger told her he loved her.
At 1:30 AM, anonymously on the phone. He said
know this to be true and she hung up. I want to know
what's true. I want to know what there is that's worth faith.
I want to trust a lover's silence again and I want

never to. I tell Sue I can't separate real feeling
from nursery-rhymes. I always believed that language
had power. Nothing I said could've changed him.
I believed words must fight for truth and that truth,
not men, should be sacrificed for. Truth is

I hate my waste of words.

2.

I should recite the list of dyings: old-growth,
ivory-cursed rhinos, family farms,
families—instead I use dolphins and wolves
as examples of mismatched lovers. I try and give
my voice over to the earth's eulogy and every time
what's still beautiful and still here
disappears and I'm left
more than lonely. I'm hopeless.

But then comes Sue's voice
saying let's spend tonight on Grass Mountain,
just us, the dogs, and a bottle of tequila
we won't open. And, hanging up, I find a pen
because I have to give thanks for Sue
and friends that help heal, thanks for the rivers we have
and the seasons at any phase, and phrases that lead
my laughing, my crying, my learning
and my thanks. It's the most I can give.