

# THE QUARRY

## The Extra, Cynthia

Sam Moon

The work is continual,  
to fill the spaces around you like air,  
the backdrop influence of the wind,  
the tide. Lifeblood of the day-to-day  
flowing downstage through streets,  
stores, out of mind the way sea  
evades the hand. I slip through  
the set, through memory,  
and construct an ambiance

—The coffeeshop businessman too crisp  
for his slouch, for the casualness stretched  
in his chair, failing to smother a grin—

With careful randomness,  
I populate every set-piece,  
blending conversation dotting  
the scene like wallpaper  
flowers behind a portrait of you

—The kids at the mall, uniforms pressed  
against the stairway handrails, singing  
to the height disparities of adolescence—

Surrounding you, I deliver  
the background heartbeats;  
footsteps of the world-builders  
echoing across the stage,  
your stage, breaking  
like waves on the shore  
of your soliloquy

—The matching smiles between a father  
and the toddler who hangs on his arm  
like hope, laughing like a wish—

I weave between spotlights  
that know you like a lover, love you  
like a savior, starring in my landscape  
of the brushed shoulder;  
the lullaby that fills a city,  
that settles in a story

—The single exposed head in a blooming  
field of umbrellas, hunched over  
pinstripes grey as the falling sky—

A reassuring movement  
suspended on the coast of your eye,  
I sing familiarity on a stage  
that never ends. The quiet solace

passing like savored time, purrs  
the way a hearth-warmed quilt  
adores the shoulder, all-encompassing  
in the warmth of ovation

—The girl whose shoes glittered like the idea  
of summer as she bounced by your window  
on your last lazy Thursday—

Safe in realism, confidence,  
the triumph of the quest  
that calls you like the curtain  
calls encore, you march  
a finale in monologue.  
My silent role in union  
of the stage, in the bowing  
cut to black, we live.

*Count 1 1 2*

Listen

Through the filters

And hear the air

In your mouth

Counting stiff

*seven*

The message

That slithers in skulls

And states

The air in your lungs

Is not yours

*nine*

The skywave intercepted

By flesh

Frozen tongue

Across your skin

Whispers to the nerves

*two*

Not alone

You have never

Breathed alone

Always borrowed air

Always gasping

Wavelengths of voice

Without you

Instructions beyond you

Saying always

Nothing except

*three*

To the one

Who knows

*zero*