

"What She Liked"

Rebecca Gimlett

She liked the way the T-shirt hung from his shoulders. It was blue like water, and like water it rippled down, first off his shoulder blades, and then to the hem in lazy folds. When he shifted, those folds shifted in a kaleidoscope of shadows. He looked to the side and they dove in toward his spine; he looked back ahead and that series of ripples, it refit itself, a sheet of blue silk blowing in the wind.

His jeans. She liked those too. The way they moved over and moved around his body. Stiff, not like water, more like denim, but still blue, stained, splotched with paint, frayed at the bottoms where the heels of his shoes met the edge. They bent when he kneeled, marking the spot where he began and the world stopped. When he stood and when he slipped his hands into the front pockets, lackadaisical and at ease, the motion moved his shirt again.

Waves of blue. Lapping ocean tides. Shadows and lines rocking back and forth like a porch swing every time he shrugged or yawned, and she had to imagine the skin beneath, stretching and shifting, and the muscles beneath, stretching and shifting and relaxing, and beneath the muscles, the bone. Then his soul, somewhere deeper, rolling along like grasses bent in a meadow breeze that caught the kite of his smile along the way.

That kite, loose to the sky, drifted in his eyes, also blue, And, loose to the gods, it would dance there as he laughed. The laughter would stir the shirt to slip and slide again, because the laughter shook his shoulders and the rest of him, down to his tattered sneakers. The vibrations went out into the world around him, touching every ladybug, every tree leaf, every railroad track, every ray of sunlight with music.

And she liked that too.