



Stray

Adam Houle

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The tickling of ivories, or birdsong, how one note relates to the next and amounts to something more—that's the initial impression of Adam Houle's lines, as they go about their work describing outdoor trades, chores, and pursuits. A Pushcart nominee, Houle's poems have appeared in *Poet Lore*, *Blackbird*, *Shenandoah*, and other journals. He has a PhD from Texas Tech.

SOMNILOQUENCE ON THE HIGH PLAINS

*When dreams rise from you familial past
of tongue-speakers seared in Holiness
I listen for some sense in the gamboling
vowels and consonants as they spill
from the headwaters of your lips.
The Pentecostal Spirit inflames you.
Come daybreak, you are drawn and wan,
changed, the way Oklahoma's red dust
must have stained the hand-spun hems
of dresses worn by the stalk-thin women
you weigh yourself against, reckoning
nightly in your attic glossolalia a faith
that compels you to seek more rousing fires,
first through grace then by sore travails.
Wet your brow. The lenient city admits you now
from off night's furnace of creosote and shale.*

MATT SUTHERLAND (May/June 2017)

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