

Shae Kripinsky – Two Poems

Kudzu Girls

Because of course the kudzu
could be a metaphor for the
mis-maligned, those of us who
are hated and heated, despite
offering up no threat.
Rapacious vines, we
chew, we swallow, we
feel the humidity pressing
its soft hand to the side
of our jaw. We run
through the leaves,
leaving behind the scent
of our grape bubble gum.
Tell me a secret, we said,
and we said, I can feel
it growing.

\$10 Flea Market Psychic Reading

And there's no hint of New Jersey in her voice
and no hint from her of the knowledge
as yet unknown to me
that my family on my mother's father's side
helped found the state long before
they lost the silent sea. She
shuffles the cards, her fingers ringed. Gray hair
pulled back, her keychain
pink plastic with glitter,
#1 Grandma,
her voice leathered
by a pack a day. She drops
the cards onto the table, three, four
at a time. Death, Justice,
the High Priestess. She must know I know—
and yet, her reading is her own, her
meanings not matching mine.
You will live a long time, she says. Far longer
than him, and women will hurt you. A death
in August.

Whose?
A woman's.
Does she deserve it?
What, exactly, gets earned? Karmic balance,
karmic debt—who's to say what those figures are.
Well, you?
No.
Of course I already was suspicious,
looking for hooks on which to hang
my refutations. (If we get
what we pay for, should I have
slapped down
an additional twenty?)
The palm reader that one time before:
no grand proclamations, no
you will have two dogs and three sons
(what would I even name
three sons?) (Tristan,
Gideon, Declan). Rather, flattery.
You are well-liked, a leader
(of whom? I can't even
lead myself out of a glass of water).
Yet neither of them knew
I was not a woman
but blue light,
radiating, and paper cuts
to those who refuse
to let themselves feel
and a wonder, a wonder, a wild desire.
Though even if they would have told me that,
would I have
believed them?

Shae Krispinsky lives in Tampa, FL, where she fronts the indie rock band, "Navin Ave." Her short fiction and creative non-fiction have appeared in *Vending Machine Press*, *Connotation Press*, *The Citron Review*, *Thought Catalog* and more. She is currently at work on two novels and finishing up her band's first album.