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Dreams Under the Red Eye of a Hotel Television // In a World Gone Shallow

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Dreams Under the Red Eye of a Hotel Television

Avocado Toast

You've made a bold move. It's scary and everyone is asking you why.
Trust yourself. Worst comes to worst, you can always cover it up.

Yellow Light

Gun it, baby. Life's too short.

Elephant Ears

You wish for something soft and colorful in your life—consider buying a
parakeet.
But don't teach it swear words.

Gold Eagle

You will finally be published by an up-and-coming publishing house.
If sitting, you should skip town. Things aren't going to end well.

Flat Tire

Double check before leaving: passport, wallet, toothbrush, underwear, date.

Lightning

You dream of power. The thoughts in your head ram into one another, creating static, bubbling energy—unharnessed capacity for greatness.

Raindrops

The scent of a man fresh from the shower is intoxicating.

Moose

A man's head may look pretty on the wall, but if his heart is still in shedding season leave him in the wild. There's no reason to pay the hauling fee.

Needle

You seek a form of correction in your appearance. Quit eating so many cookies.

Railroad

You will leave in the dark without saying goodbye. The early morning moon will guide you down the mountain pass and onto the plains before he even wakes.

Firetruck

Your love life isn't meant to be explosive, but rather a steady burning log in a stone hearth. Children will snuggle down by your side to warm themselves. Embrace them gently.

Starbucks

Your next job will start at 7:00 a.m. You've been warned.

VW Bug

Your goals need a mechanic, not a junkyard. Pick up a quart of oil, a new toolbox, spare tire, and a few flares. The Redwoods are waiting.

In a World Gone Shallow

I see him across the parking lot,
a rutted expanse flattened by a dodgy paving company,
his wide eyes darting

above an orange bandana
as he scurries toward the main entrance.
A family of four explodes

onto the sidewalk, laughing. Grabbing hands.
He jumps, diverting paths
like schools of sardines rippling

away from the shark's open jaws.
Shiny black hands pull on steel handles,
ducking inside.

Soon he sits across from me,
body like a board.
His gray eyes sinking.

Ten feet apart, maybe twelve.
I wave and point to the slender paper bag
next to my chair.

He holds his up too, dropping the bandana inside
as the nurse's violet hands fit a light blue mask
over his face. It's only the two of us for now

with our eyes closed and our plastic bags
that should be clear and filled with fish,
not neon yellow that drips poison into our chests.

But more people trickle in
and paper bags are creased,
sagging closer to the floor each hour.

One young woman coughs quietly. Ten pairs of shifty eyes
and hidden faces jerk to glare. And suddenly, I realize
we've all turned into bank robbers.