

Crackington Haven

Jodi Johnson

From where they lie on the bluff it seems distant, a tiny
glass-domed scene: a handful of dark-shining sand between
stiff arms of seawater, waves unrolling
over it in white lines, gulls shaking down
out of the sky like snow.

The downsloping yellow grass
is clean-stemmed, slick as horsehair under them. In her half sleep
she feels herself suddenly hanging in air and wakes,
letting the earth circle slowly out beneath her:
it is her old fear of throwing herself off edges.
Shadows in water, windy days, cars
pouring in even streams under a bridge — all
tugged at her. She felt it most last summer on their honeymoon,
standing on top of the Eiffel Tower,
the Champs du Mars at their feet
green and smooth as billiard cloth. All the people
kept to gravel paths. She threw two francs through the wire fence
watched them shine on the way down, thought of making
a surprising red flower on the grass.

She presses into the earth —
safe smell of heather, looks at him sleeping
with his arm flung over his eyes. She could walk
right off into the sea and he would never know. He would see
later where she had been, her shape
traced in the grass.

She thinks that even now
she might be spinning away from him,
cartwheeling the sky.