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When the Palm Reader Sees That You Have
Two Life Lines, He Says You Must Choose One

Jennifer Perrine

I

Like the road
more traveled by,
your future has a use.
You will be tamped down,
firm as footsteps,
stretches of you littered
with loose change and leaves.
You will be paved with prints
not yours, marked by
what you have carried,
the dry dust of you
kicked up every time.
Subtle, silent,
faithful, you will be worn
with habit, or else
abandoned, weeds
growing through
your body, the cracked
surface of you. But
underneath,
the touch of roots,
work-hollows, complex
vessels of under-skin.
Like the road
more traveled by,
no one will write poems
about you.

II

The road ahead
is not a road at all
but a river, silt-strewn
rock-rub of your belly.
No birth but a fall
from the sky, you pool,
pouring over, sliding out.
You swallow fish whole,
spilling them in your wake,
ridges of sun string out
on you. Electric, your current
floods every time
it rains, your body
rising up like a threat,
like a glorious wet
hunger. You freeze,
you thaw, you fuck
the dead things buried
inside you. You trickle
sickly in your dry spells.
You carry filth
the same as you carry
bronzed bodies.
In the end, you disappear,
absorbed, atomized, diffused
into one great body
more turbulent than you.