

My Version of Longing's Version of Longing

rhea Xie

The woman in the green beret
ordered a "Hateful Love."

The man behind her
did too.

Someone asked the waiter
what a "Hateful Love" was —

would Hateful Love come out of
the kitchen,

her hair cut too short,
already regretted,

the glowing purple on her face,
a look she had only just begun to try,

a black JanSport,
a red ribbon tied to the zipper,

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her loafers loud enough
to drown the café,

passing the tables
one by one,

and, without looking back,
throwing something
into the trash.

I kissed her sleeping eyes.
She woke up.

I told her about the man I loved,
though I did not know him.

She pulled my hair,
telling me to keep going.

Perhaps the man
was only the meaning

that kept our conversation alive.

She turned away,
toward the other girls.

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Steal something from the kitchen,
I said.

If we were thieves, she said,
we were too professional.

She walked toward the door.

I ran after her.

The waiter said
"Hateful Love"
was a mixture of
corn chowder
and potatoes.

I thought I would always be
the stone in the Bible
longing to be humiliated.

For a while,
this was my understanding of love.