

1997

Aloe Vera

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Recommended Citation

Taylor, Bekah (1997) "Aloe Vera," *Exile*: Vol. 44 : No. 2 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol44/iss2/13>

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Aloe Vera

I first saw her with wet shoes surrounded
by watches, the green one calling out
“accessorize accessorize” and she laid
a shining card on the counter
and their smiles didn’t matter
as she reached for the bag. Floating out

onto the street, I glided after that spoken green
form woven through masses of gray suits.
I saw her notice the rain, looking up
and around and then staring down at the price
of her shoes, reflected in her dripping face.
I imagined she was thinking about suede,

squinting as she tried to remember
why she hadn’t read the weather this morning.
I thought of her painting her nails, tendrils
of cigarette wrapping around her hair
from the thick crystal tray. Her heel caught
in a crack and she stuttered, pulling me from

her kitchen back to feet in the rain.
The purse and shoes and scarf
were all matching, and her walk
knew it. Reaching the corner,
she stepped down easily and ignored
the flashing hand; and my feet were pounding

and I had to follow her, run into her,
over her, something before she was a green
speck on the cityscape. So I dodged
the whole of New York and would have married her,
would have plucked the young shoot
from the sidewalk cracks but the light

turned red and I clutched the last of her,
a handbag, a green scarf waving good-bye.

—Bekah Taylor '00