

2023

Self-Portrait from the Wall

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Recommended Citation

Koeppen, Elizabeth (2023) "Self-Portrait from the Wall," *Exile*: Vol. 70: No. 1, Article 9.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol70/iss1/9>

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Self-Portrait from the Wall
Elizabeth Koeppen

Will she sit quietly today,
stuck to me, like a lemon long forgotten
in a ceramic bowl never moved
from its undusted corner?

Will she soak up the life around her,
a sponge never wrung out,
so it crumbles in the sink instead?

Will she position an antenna to catch
every syllable until only static floods,
all meaning lost?

Will she sip or spill the nectar,
cloying as cake or
bitter as battery acid?

Will she try her luck with buzzing
around, finding her own spot at the table
as her wings, filmy little instruments,
whir incessantly?

Will she be met with warmth,
given an orange peel before
it meets the trash, or even
a mouth-watering secret to keep?

Will she savor every word,
holding tightly to the morsels and
keeping them safe beneath her
membrane of veins?

Or will she fly back to me,
returning to her role
as fly on the wall?