

# Two Gates

By Denise Low

I look through glass and see a young woman  
of twenty, washing dishes, and the window  
turns into a painting. She is myself thirty years ago.  
She holds the same blue bowls and brass teapot  
I still own. I see her outline against lamplight;  
she knows only her side of the pane. The porch  
where I stand is empty. Sunlight fades. I hear  
water run in the sink as she lowers her head,  
blind to the future. She does not imagine I exist.

I step forward for a better look and she dissolves  
into lumber and paint. A gate I passed through  
to the next life loses shape. Once more I stand  
squared into the present, among maple trees  
and scissor-tailed birds, in a garden, almost  
a mother to that faint, distant woman.

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Former Kansas poet laureate Denise Low earned her BA, MA, and PhD in English from the University of Kansas, and her MFA from Wichita State University. She is a fifth generation Kansan of mixed British Isles, German, and unaffiliated Delaware (Lenape and Munsee) and Cherokee heritage. She and her husband Thomas Pecore Weso co-publish Mammoth Publications, an independent press that specializes in Indigenous American and Great Plains poetry and literary prose.

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