



1999

## Chastity

Jared Pearce

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# Chastity

|||||  
Jared Pearce

The scrub juniper exploding dark green life  
and shadow around us, over us; the night hours when  
even crickets have stopped dancing. Curiosity,  
the eternal in another's body—sacred

individuality beyond touch—like the narrow  
between clavicles. We treated each  
other like temples, proselytes  
approaching the holy. My nervousness

in sustaining distance and desire since in some months  
I'd leave to try religion—I always wanted  
to be a religious man. But I'm divining  
the lonely freshness of a second skin moving

independently in synch—I'm sure snakes  
are used to this—and hearing a voice say  
wait, and walking home by moonlight and speaking  
of rightness. I imagine, after a belly-full

of knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve spoke  
of this—justification for wanting  
to be so near another human person connected  
to an idea of falling—

In love and engaged. Making out in the old pickup  
in Prescott, spring, parched for each other  
over months of abstinence. Dizzy communion, our bodies  
signs, we walked along the cemetery

where a bleached tombstone Gabriel spooked  
us back to the comfort of the radio and reckless  
driving. Laughing at ourselves we stopped only twice  
on the road home to straighten make-up,

hairdos, excuses. Her mother only slightly noticed  
the rosy flush at our throats in the morning.  
We still smirk about that—the funny, moral  
wriggling of being caught in love.