

Sweet Home, Oregon

Cliff Taylor

A picnic table of us staring up at the stars in Oregon. People who've never met becoming like old friends in just a couple days. The deep quiet of the campgrounds lapping around us, our forms the color of night with our swept up eyes the only bits of white. Tomorrow while dancing I'll see this procession of giant old beings coming into our space through the gap between two trees, visitors appearing in an improvised gateway. In a month I'll be another nameless new stranger trying to make my way in the sweet and rainy city of Seattle. We look at the gorgeous slow-motion smear of the Milky Way until our necks actually begin to hurt. The past a hand that you haven't been touched by in months, back half of America away; the future a woman's hand that you hope will be touching you soon, that you might have to touch first. "I don't know if I've ever seen the stars like this before," an older woman with an accent says. My neck aches but I force myself to keep looking up.