

# THE MOUNTAIN IN THE WEST

Preston Lyerly

When we're driving down Bataan Memorial, just past the intersection with interstate 25, she'll look at you. For a fleeting moment, she will look at you.

That look may appear to convey an indifference – a lack of any discernible or notable emotions towards your existence. Is she humoring you, a small lick of tiny amusement towards your life that arouses a minuscule section of her thought for a moment lost in time?

I deny these assumptions about her, these ideas that she is so pious that she can't share what she feels toward you or anyone else. What I see is love in her Mesilla-sparkled eyes. This is not the love to describe your middle school sweetheart of 38 hours; or the puppy you saw in some cute-animal-in-the-rain on a chain picture you liked and shared on Facebook.

No. This is a deep, holy, penetrating, moving, divine love, the likes of which could not be grasped by 1,000 dead poets with a million dictionaries. This love is given in blindness and equality to all those who find themselves subject to her awe-inspiring reign over the Desert of Chihuahua.

She sets her eyes upon you and I, not for the brief moment of the day that we perceive with our mortal eyes, but for an eternity plus three infinities and then some. She will see your greatest ecstasy, and my deepest lonely desperation.

She'll see my rise to the king of kings, and your collapse down to the River Styx. And although she sees all of your futures and all of my pasts, she will not set a feather of judgement upon us.

The gun-toters, the drug-runners, the gang-sign-flashers, the bastard children and their

beat down, forgotten mothers; she sees not their choices, and she sees not their morals – she just sees you – she just sees *me*. Not a coward, not a liar, not a cheater – just you and me.

She doesn't claim to be the blood, or the brain, or the power, but the Organ. She is the Organ. An organ that pumps the very essence of the desert into the blood of those who have settled it. An organ that provides nutrients into the land bringing the already vibrant tones of the windy sands alive more. An organ whose existence stands so tall and has stood for so long, that she has seen oceans rise and fall at her feet. She did not seek glory, but it has been bestowed by time in and of itself.

We have journeyed the world to grace her fertile slopes and bask in her ability to command the hearts of those who witness her, but she retains her own inner innocence and spirit. From the humblest of gatherers who needed only her gift of the river to prosper to the mightiest force this blue marble has ever seen, a force who sends their flying metal angels above her peaks at speeds that shake the sky.

She will never gloat, nor will she boast, of her accomplishments, though she has more than earned it. From her molten soul's core, she only wishes for the creatures that find themselves infatuated with her lands to pursue happiness.

So we keep on driving, this thought moving through my head like lightning in the stormy desert sky. We make our right turn towards our destination on Mesa Grande thinking mostly our comparatively trivial thoughts. I, however, say my last prayer to that which will always be my one lifelong lover; the Organ Mountains and her village of Las Cruces, New Mexico.





*"Terrain," photo by Kailey Cota*