

Studio One

Volume 47

Article 13

2023

Her Palette

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Recommended Citation

Luftig, Richard (2023) "Her Palette," *Studio One*: Vol. 47, 19-20.

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Her Palette

She struggles,
as always,
to mix her best

tones, discarding,
if she can,
that which she doesn't

need most.
When younger
she believed

that a palette
once formed
should never

waiver, should
last a lifetime.
But being alone

does something
to a person:
it washes out

hues, burns away
color like sun
on morning fog.

It happened
exactly
like this

when she awoke
that day and found
he was gone.

Her life grew
washed out
like the way

full sun bleaches
a desert. But when
she moved back

to the Plains
where she was born,
slowly, so slowly

as cottonwoods
grow along
semi-dry creeks,

she learned again
how this land
so full, so flat,

so filled
with winter
wheat can teach

one to rub
and scrape
away all

unneeded borders
of one's life
until all you are

is contained within
the remaining
negative space.

Richard Luftig