

ABBY LLORICO - DUSK IN PORTLAND - COLOR THEORY 10.21.20

This green smells wet and crisp, like the part of the morning when anything is possible.

Anything is possible, I'm finally here.

Zoysia and clover swallow my midwestern roots, but this green has its own gravitational pull. This green is dark even in the bright, warm even as the sun dips below the jagged horizon. It takes on new life moment by moment, a new shadow character with the changing light, until the black of night overwhelms it. Moss on the stones. Trees that scrape the clouds. Grass that sprouts between cracks in the sidewalk, a surprise. The color, evergreen, itself a promise: I'll be back tomorrow, and the next day.

The city is both white and colorful, they prefer to call it colorful.

We leave it behind, the signage of the city in the rear view, green still all around. Evergreen.

He tells me he wished it was greener, like the winter. I would love it in the winter.

I love it now.

The air is clear and also gray and also blue, no sign of the promised rain.

I pack my jacket just in case.

Green becomes black too quickly as we speed through the trees: up a winding road.

To the top.

The yellow headlights push back the blackness, a violet shade of ochre path pulling us along.

Only in the mountains can the light be both purple and yellow.

This will be worth it, he says. The only green now neon and blaring and reminding us: not much time.

Is the electric light sucking the green from around us?

Here it is. A half dozen cars parked in a gravel lot more violet than ochre now, no more reflection of green in their windows.

Run.

He takes off up the path, darker but still green.

Still green. Still time.

I only feel red. I don't run.

Rewards along the way: fleeting sights of green. Not pausing for long enough to confirm the expanses are really hundreds of individual trees stretching up around each other to catch the last bits of light.

Stairs. Stairs? The grey concrete welcomes us with a reflection of the last bit of the day, bright against the purple rock below it. Two at a time.

I am too short for this. The red, at least, is fading.

Wow, he says. Wow. He found them: the mountains in the distance, points of purple and grey carved against a grey and purple sky. Camouflage at 11,000 feet.

The green below is blacker, and blacker. We cast a shadow. I turn around.

The green is dipped in gold, edges of trees and rocks and shrubbery. The evergreen is back as promised, framing up a sight beyond that is totally new.

Fire flows through the gorge, winding through the green-turned-grey like a young couple on a mission. It's a mirror to the sky hanging above it, heavy with the weight of so many colors: orange, pink, yellow.

The combination tastes salty. I wipe away tears.

Then, moments later, the black wipes the rest of it away.

Out west, we rushed for a sunset, and struck gold.