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Matchstick keeper

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Matchstick keeper

loves me, loves me not,
loves me, loves me not, loves
me, loves me – van Gogh painted her
petals in the color of a highway
sunset. the world is ending a little
at a time, beginning in this empty
parking lot; California was meant
to burn. on fire, not on fire, on
fire – he cut off his ear, again
and again. then he soaked the sunflower
seeds in his spilled blood. the rivers run
hollow, but he will bleed to water the fields
yellow. he will die on this canvas, his fate
sealed by paint drier than a cactus forest.
acrylics stuck beneath his fingernails,
he scratches the surface of national
geographic photographs. he carried
a thousand ghosts in his palette, somebody,
give him a band-aid for fuck's sake. who
would have thought that his brush could turn
red into blue and blue into the brightest color?
like light filtering through the blinds of my
window, seeping honey in the morning when
the rooster tattooed on her skin calls on the
scarecrow to protect van Gogh's field of
sunflowers. she told me it means home and
home is with her always, but I made my home
in the parking lot where the matchstick keeper
dwells. he's driving across burnt bridges while
trumpets play on the radio, interrupted by static
spells and chants. one hand on the steering wheel
of his truck, a piece of bambi's antlers hanging
from the keychain. bambi's roadkill, bambi's hooves
forever treading the flames, bambi's taxidermied
head mounted above the fireplace where smoke
signals erupt from the chimney. they say,
don't get too close, your canvas is only coal
here. your canvas turned to ash, your wings will

catch fire; California burns
yellow.

About Jona L. Pedersen

Jona L. Pedersen grew up on an island on Norway's coast, but has since relocated to the US to pursue a degree in English with a minor in biology at the University of North Dakota. When they aren't studying, they like to explore the outdoors, spend time with their two rats, and make art. In their writing, Jona aspires to capture the wonders of the natural world – creating stories which tread the line between reality and dreams