

# *Catharine Lucas*

## THE LOOK

*Intimacy is the undefended holding of the self in the presence of another's otherness.*

But what do I know?

One glance, over sushi and tofu, in the politeness of the final days—  
Our eyes lock and hold, the two-sided mirror cracks, falls away.  
I mark this: I am being *seen* at last by my lover who is leaving me.  
Just once, then, at least this once, I think,  
meeting the long level look I have hungered for.

This is not The Gaze—distant from new lovers' droopy-lidded  
stares as flint from foam. For this, I'd do again that painful  
score of years. I sit and *see you* back.

Later, after the lawyers and the money and the deed to the  
house, we stand on the curb to send you off in your new red  
Subaru. I mention it, call it "That naked look." You nod.

"I will feel less lonely," I intone, "remembering that."

"Actually," you say, "what I was thinking, in that moment,  
was how full of bullshit you were and how you didn't get me—  
or yourself—at all."

You climb in the car. Pull away. Don't look back.

And yet, that one clear-eyed look is where I long to rest  
my memory of you. I trusted that look and was grateful for it;  
wanted such honesty in my own repertoire. Believed for awhile  
we might have survived had we found it sooner.

