

# **PILGRIMS: A Love Story**

**T.J. Beitelman**



**Black Lawrence Press**  
New York

# CONTENTS

- 11 some things you need to know to start out
- 12 square one
- 13 the inciting incident
- 14 castaways
- 15 you are here: *The borderland between the Nogales in Mexico  
and the one in Arizona.*
- 16 i-19's flat belly allows gabo to contemplate his starry companion
- 17 the dark settles in
- 18 oasis
- 19 you are here: *Past the City of Eternal & Fiery Rebirths.*
- 20 the red lake motor lodge, arizona hwy 64
- 21 the real reason they came all this way, or you can't get there from here
- 22 a story at bed
- 23 gabo's leap spans a canyon
- 25 forsaken jude at the mouth of the great, dry chasm
- 26 gabo encounters incarnations of the king
- 27 purgatorio
- 28 gabo finds a poem in vegas's  
tickertape detritus
- 29 the eternal word
- 30 you are here: *Somewhere no one is.*
- 31 gabo returns
- 33 a little song with dickinson in the wings
- 35 cathedral
- 36 jude's last gasp at knowing
- 38 the new religion

## **PILGRIMS: A Love Story**

*A man finds out that there is somewhat in him  
that knows more than he does. Then he comes  
presently to the curious question, who's who?  
which of these is really me? the one that knows  
more or the one that knows less? the little fellow,  
or the big fellow?*

—Emerson, *Journals*, 1859

**some things you need to know to start out**

An Otherworld.

Disparate Elements come together.

There is some Greater Power, perhaps even working for the  
Greater Good.

## **square one**

These are facts:

In this world, Jude Law exists as a beautiful Englishman.

This is a world where we drink Slurpees, drive late-model  
Cars, fill them with non-renewable fuels.

On Tuesday I bought a watch and a peach at Walmart.  
There is another blue world. The paint and the artists

Have reversed; Squeezed from small tubes, slowly, with a certain crafts-  
Manship, the limnists appear, slight smiles on their faces.

## **the inciting incident**

Scene: *Arc d' Triumph*. Jude Law meets Gabriel Garcia Marquez, calls him Gabo.

Marquez slaps the boy and calls him *puta*, Bitch, and they are instantly transported

To a deserted island where they must listen  
To evangelists until they repent and kiss

On the lips. A stand-off for months. Then the rainy season.  
The droplets, open mouths. The two men kiss like dust.

**castaways**

Gabo and Jude: a lion and a witch, but which  
Is which is mostly a puzzle. It has been a hurricane.

They're swept to Cuba, drifted from climes  
Nondescript to a here-and-now broken-down fantasyland:

Busted windows, looting; sirens; Packards and Comets,  
Held together by string, gum, rubber bands. Gabo climbs

Into a red Edsel, unbuttons his shirt. Jude halts, runs a hand  
Through his hair. Gabo looks sideways at the boy. *Putá. Putá.*

**you are here:** *The borderland between the Nogales in Mexico  
and the one in Arizona.*

Poof! A Magic Red Car plopped down in the desert.

Gabo and Jude are hurled along the American highways.

Their Real Aim: Unknown.

**i-19's flat belly allows gabo to  
contemplate his starry companion**

*The skin like the bottom of a child  
Is what kills me, muses the Colombian.*

*Beauty distilled to a shimmer. He gazes  
As they drive through this great desert*

Into the full heat of the sun. The two go berserk  
Together. Their minds a certain kind of wild.

*I can do nothing but stare at his pristine face.  
My kingdom for a showgirl or some other narcotic.*

**the dark settles in**

No ideas but in things. Gabo  
has grown cold, silent. Jude  
takes to recitations: *Make it new;*  
*The only thing we have to fear:*

Once, in Tucson, the two men  
shared the same thought:  
*The world is brown. Dusty. Forsaken.*  
A serendipitous moment,

though they would never know it.  
Not now: windows down, careening  
through the Great Desert, sending  
great and awful plumes into the sky.

There is only the sound of them.  
A dusty headache they share. A destiny.

**oasis**

It is the Denny's in Casa Grande.  
Gabo eats his eggs and cheese; Jude

Cannot stop laughing. What, says  
Gabo. Him, says Jude, and points.

A fat man. 3 plates around him.  
It is the middle of the night.

Gabo chuckles despite himself. The fat  
man licks his fork, smiles. Alone and happy.