



Is This Still Life?

by Monique S. Simón

~~on reading *Still Life with Woodpecker* by Tom Robbins after an M.E./CFS crash

Can I escape into a vape, like the princess escaped into the image on the cover of a box of Camel cigarettes?

Is this still life if I peck away at nothing wood?

Am I a princess because I mourn the loves of my life by blocking out the sun and sounds, and barely using a splash-splash to wash the weariness, the wary of an aching body, a tattered soul?

All propped up on soft pillows and cushions, sensitive to a pea or what else, who knows?

My life is grown over with unruly bushes and bushels of half-baked notions; with frayed internal wires, and energy dashes met by energy crashes. Like somebody set the timer and sealed the envelope with a fateful message inside: "Go about your life; exact your theories; seize the day; make your plans—yes go all in *and* all out. But look around and beyond, because I'm coming up unawares to blow up you living, and drop dead center another energy crash-collision—lay you low, lay you down, down, down..."

You are the master of your fate, if fate and destiny is that you must live in the cloud, in the fog, in the download-still loading-poor connection-no bars-battery power safe mode.

Lay up, Princess, in your skin castle. A-part from the world in a world of dreamers, pecking away at nothing wood. Escape in the vape; upload to the cloud; and when the rain comes, perhaps the umbrella will notice you are like the millions—missing.