Empire Burlesque
Svenvold, Mark

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Mornings on the beach, magisterially early, you’d been up for hours while we’d lumbered, 
*yea, verily*, clear-cutting the forests of Siberia, 
soon to be hung-over, disabled & bound 

by a sense of yet another capitulation 
to cliché: *should I leave my diaphragm in?* 
Stumped, as it were, I sprang for the strange. 
I labored for nearly an *hour* over a poem. 

By then you’d come up from the shore, 
as sails unfurled over the glint of the sound. 
A woman out of R. Crumb cut across the field, 
all breasts and boots and calves. You stared at her 

then read my poem: “Krakatoa Toothbrush Painters.” 
*Strange*, you said, *but predictable, like yesterday’s antlers.*