

—| **ADRIANNE KALFOPOULOU** | He Wants Me to Describe It

My friend wants to know what I think of  
when I panic. I pause in front of lit shop windows of long  
wrap-around scarves, beaded necklines and Indian silks.  
*Absence, abandonment* are the words  
but they don't satisfy him. Our kids are in a bakery  
calling us to taste how quickly meringue  
melts on the tongue, how sweet it is. We forget it's late  
until we say goodbye.

He will go back to his apartment with his daughter  
who will soon go back to her mother in New York.  
I will drive home on the night road  
where I almost met oblivion. His daughter will cry  
because she doesn't want to leave, my daughter will cry  
because she doesn't know why Christmas didn't feel like Christmas.  
I will remember how easily the car wheels skidded  
off the wet road in a new year rain.

When I panic I think of that wide desert space,  
the expanding field of it, the harsh cold swallow of hope  
in a black night drive when the roads are wet and you have had  
too much to drink and desperately want to reach home, the feeling  
is as still as a punished child waiting to slam its fist into the door.