

LAURA IN THE SOUTHWEST

for Julia Leichman

She says she likes the colors: a carpet
of dried blood and sand unrolling
over three parched states.

She tells me it's a holy place: the
vegetation contorted plants that supplicate
for years without the blessing of rain.

Her body is glare-white, though
not quite bone for there are shadows,
born only from flesh-fed pain,

laying in wait underneath the
wide expanse of her eyes.
She tells me she's been dreaming

of driving to New Mexico in a blue
van, with people she has come to love but
has yet to meet, and

stopping with them at some desolate
point in the middle of that
sepia aridity.

I know when I see
her again she will be thinner still,
nearly hollow.

She is wasting away.

She tells me she's just
planting the excess in the desert
in anticipation of floating home to me.