The Lavender Bees
M. Whitney Olsen

Against the garden wall
furry strands of lavender
erupt with bees.
Wings, stingers and eyes
hesitate on nodding stalks of milky green,
bobbing knots of dusky purple.
Over my head nested in the grass,
the whiz and drone of wings seems muted
in lavender’s soporific aroma,
musk and raspberry,
consuming as prairie dust.

One bee, knobbed and pouchled like thumbs
flashes a furred orange thorax in his jealous crawl
across one violet cluster
swinging like a vine against my wrist.
Another, bulbous and gargantuan,
nuzzles a cloud of pollen with overlarge knees.
He shunts aside a tiny honeybee,
Whose pale stripes disappear
into shady petals and yellow centers.

All humming, the lavender bushes
bend and nod, perfuming this sunspot day
into a sleep found nowhere but here.

Desert Me
Elise Doney

I come into
myself and you
leave. I leave
and you wake.

The whirling pink
and yellow desert
pictures you hang
up. The glare
from the sun
at eye level
in your window
shifting orange shapes
over the glass
frames when you
stare and move
from one corner
to the other.

Your summer drive
through sand, sky
almost one color
but for pastel
Ferris wheels rising
from the blank
shifts of sand.
Whirring lights, pinpricks

The desert is
one long road
to you and
to me. I
live in it.