

Flying

August evening,
and the swallows are hunting the dahlia fields,
flying the evening's warm winds upward,
feasting on an array of creatures,
thrips, western cucumber beetles, green flies,
leaf hoppers, moths.
The grace of the birds in flight
is nearly unimaginable --
a magic theater of color, light, and movement,
a troupe of aerialists mad with the pure joy of flying,
circling up from the symmetrical rows of flowers
in a living gyre.

In my dreams
I fly with the swallows.
I see beyond the westward hills,
where the sun is setting,
its edge still protruding from the great Pacific.

-- Jim Manuel

A Long Shadow

(For my father)

The wet sand underneath his feet
flows out from under him but he's quick,
too quick to get caught going down.

Light on his feet, he lifts off the shifting surface of the
sand. Ahead to firmer footing, he makes a game of it,
jumps at the last second. Just as the sand sinks away he
lands in the elusive sand of promise.

Finally, he lets his bare feet settle into holes filling with icy
water.

Back to the ocean, he sinks the small, short-handled shovel
in front of the slight hole indentation with an intent and
force that stuns the unsuspecting razor clam.
One, two, three tiny shovel-fulls of sand fly from the water-
filled hole. He buries his quick hand up to mid-arm in the
numbing water and grabs the fleeing clam
as it head toward the ocean.
The clam loses, he wins. This time.

There are other indentations
with no prize at the bottom of the hole.
But slowly slowly the bucket fills
with the allotted number of razors.
They process the bucket water: doing much of their own
cleaning their pulsating necks stick out from wet, golden
shells.

He counts and counts again:
the number is accurate.

Stepping just ahead of his long shadow, he heads across
the wide white beach towards the Blue Gull Motel. "Some
of the biggest on the coast," he's told at the motel's
crowded cleaning station.
A Cheshire smile spreads over his burnished-brown face as
he dumps the razors into the cleaning sink.
He precisely severs the shell from the tender white meat
and lays them open with his scissors.

-- Jean Marshall

Untitled

and yes, I dance with wind and leaves
I dance with butterflies and sleep with fog
I hear the whispering secrets riding the breeze
frogs kiss me and flowers smell me
and yes, stars tell me things
I bathe in dirt and lick moss
pumpkins greet me
trees keep me
weather purifies me
and yes, rain creates me with crystal drops to my skin
and yes, I crave hollow city streets
I tease vampires and taunt death
I listen to nothing and hear emptiness
gargoyles haunt me and poison seduces me
and yes, gutter-punks trap me
I like to be bit and beaten
depression soothes me
sludge fascinates me
and yes, cement destroys nature, I don't mind

-- ali miller

Remodel

Remember when we built the deck
'mid doubt and disagreement
and finished, both stood back and grinned
proud, and pleased, and spent

We were amazed, the two of us
to find it strong and willing
to hold our weight for ten-plus years
through winters wet and chilling

Now, nails screech in protest
crowbars wrest them from their home
Lumber thumps against the ground
and causes me to moan

Progress holds the sound of pain
as old makes way for new
We begin to build again
I'm ready now, are you?

-- Anna Phillips

Excerpt from
"Enter My Dreams, Love"
after a line by Czeslaw Milosz

In our slow-growing year,
with frost in every month,
I left the grass unmowed,
let the narrow forage build,
moon by moon, watched
seedheads form. Refuges
are few in this cold light,
our history, the close of sky
with low, blue cloud, a storm
that wil not stay. Thin flakes
hold the air, hide mountains,
senseless, repetitious power.

Writers' Club Award Ceremony

Tuesday, May 13 from 2-4 p.m. in CC
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Poet
C.W.
Rawlins

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