

HAWK & WHIP- POOR- WILL

POEMS of MAN & NATURE

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HAWK & WHIPPOORWILL

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PSALM

Early rise today. Across the bay
the sun steams up from the sea.

It could be Mandalay.

Surf soothes the shore.

A kite floats, dives, rises in the sky,
a red dragon out of its mind.

Is the sky bluer today? Gulls whirl.

Children play catch-me-if-you-can

with waves that lap, retreat,

then lap again at their feet.

Girls in slim bathing suits

shine, vie with the sun.

After lunch a stroll along the water's edge,

Distant sailboats, tiny moths,

drift across the edge of the world.

What fun it must be to be on board,

though I have no desire to be

but where I am.

The tide is out, the sand flats rise.

I lay myself down in still waters,

my head bowed. I fear no evil.

Across the bay the red sun sinks into the sea.

A day like this,

Surely no greater goodness will follow me.

by Robert Riche

DEVOTION

ten little blue stems at sunset
the minyan stands tall
bends in unison
wispy heads bob to earth
then sky
 then earth again

by Jane Levin

LOST

I looked for you, when snow was fresh
and depressions left, pooled with scent,
expecting a bell voiced hound to drive
a bobcat round a cedar swamp.

When beaver swam beneath black ice
to feed-beds packed with poplar tops,
your snares did not impede their way.
I listened, when the moon was bright
for the mimicry of a dying hare;
searched blue shadows at forest edge
for your hunkered form. It wasn't there.

I found snowshoes, ash grey, gut lace
gnawed through by mice, behind the shed.
The dogs are gone, some dead, some sold
to pay for living beyond ones prime.

If memory holds, I'll try again
when birches bend branch to ground
to unconfound your aged back-trail.

by Gene Auprey

THE PROPER SOUND

After the thunderstorm's crackling resonances
the air blinks once
and in the still, unoccupied space
the birds begin their chant
as if by signal
in the tall juniper.

There is a conspiracy among them
or between them and the sky.
Their bamboo bones
divine the air's pulse
and news travels quickly
through delicate throats.

Their speech is not our speech
but as if one mouth were speaking;
it is not relief they feel
or joy as we know it
but crescendo, counterpoint,
what the proper sound is after rain.

by C.E. Chaffin

CORD

"The deer in that beautiful place lay down their bones. I must wear mine." —Robinson Jeffers

The two who'd brought him left over the rise lurching
through withered stalks,
Of goldenrod and foxglove long rifles branching from
their shoulders withdrawing
Through shadow the grass darkening for minutes he
heard their gumboots
Fretting the dew-sotted grass a thick-quilled beast
crossing the field
For the purlieu of the opposite woods ghosts now visible
holding the night in place
Gray light broke hard, clear to his right a cusp illuminating
the line of earth
So the long watch began breathing slow trying to
drive the rasp from his throat
While crickets shutter-clicked nearby the premorning
cold pulling him back to a dully remembered place
He turned into the woods aching hands outstretched
touch-walking
Through the screen small pines, a poplar in the clearing
its spire white in the bluing
Found the plank nailed crosswise with rail spikes
mounted reached into the limbs
Like a child who waits to be lifted watching the boards
revert to empty signposts
On a path where nothing would pass the outer leaves
rimed with wasp-papery frost
Thin enamel crinkling melting under fingertips he

found the case in a bough
The cartridge box in a rough bole cardboard mushy
from morning damp thirty cold points
The sky now fired faint sapphire his boots squelched
when he curled his toes when the branches sprayed
Dew on his neck the sharp angle of a nightjar's wings
crossing then disappearing
Had the forms not shifted below he might never have
known morning passed
One hoof scraped a log in the quivering pause he
found his hand already dropping the bolt in place
Ahead of two does a buck pressed spectral as mercury
dust a rotten chaplet of velvet
Garlanding the dozen points of its antlers whisking
against its bowed skull
He couldn't believe their thickening coats heavy ribs
the way black eyes sucked in
The whole world so he began counting believing a pat-
tern would catch the small gear of history
Turning in his heart when the buck ghosted past his
tree and stiffly he rose to his knees
Smelling the musky fur keeping sight of the clearing
edge where they'd turn their flanks
He clutched the stock against his shoulder working it
into his flesh then the buck was gone
And he dropped from the stand circling out a ripple
found the blood trail fifty feet in
Kept his eyes lowered, reading the black spills steaming
on leaves felt his own blood course
When the spoor darkened left the trail whenever it
lightened crossing and crossing his path
The quiet touched him through limbs and webs blind-

ing sunlight amid shadow
He heard his own ragged breath then the buck's soft
blowing as it leaned against an oak
Trying to right itself flee unable gray numbles coiled
among twigs
The boy knelt slid back the bolt hoped he'd chambered
another round but knew
As one knows an unseen fracture he had not then
made himself walk when the buck slumped
Swabbing its nose made himself believe that the buck
rose on strong legs leapt
That there were no looped guts only a cord weather-
ing in the brush a strand of cellophane
Not the pulse and shit of this live deer whose skull he
stove until his hands bled from the clenched rifle sights
And he dreamt the buck flew yes, it flew then he was
gone, running two miles
To a creek's edge his breath glistening the water buffed
obsidian wrinkling along low rocks midstream
In the chill he wondered how easy it was to surrender
someone did each winter to the lull of cold
He'd heard of old drunks frozen to statues of coal-
miners' widows their fires unstoked
Such loneliness a storm that blew open the door the
heart letting in snow wind night
So when the men began calling across the creek his
breath came quick a cord
Bridling his mouth bit and bridle of blood and song
sweet, bitter bond of mastery

by Temple Cone

TWILIGHT

Here, sitting here, in the half dark, with the bush beans and the pumpkin vines and fennel that is just beginning to bloom with a lacy blur of greenish yellow, pell mell and bright in the grey air of dusk while beet leaves, scarlet shot and earwig bitten, catch the eye beneath a strand of bittersweet nightshade, (the only vile weed in the patch but what lovely violet blossoms and blood red berries), as the shadows climb across the rows and meet the fence. . . I've understood little of how a garden grows; I toss seeds in holes, give them water, uproot weeds and somehow, some how, life itself proceeds.

by Juleigh Howard-Hobson

THE FOXES HAVE HOLES,
or ESCALANTE

And finally after all these wonders
a note folded between stones and left
specifically, reveals only as much
as the tall late afternoon clouds where
Poseidon, stately and foreshortened from below,
rides a camel.

Then three brothers in miles consider
thirty more, consider fifty mile mountain
and a bag of screws, consider the tang
of jackrabbit's blood and thin urine
before they roll up for the night
like the rest.

by George Brooks

TWO VIEWS, FROM SOME DISTANCE,
OF A DECIDUOUS TREE

The man thinks of the lone and leafless tree mirrored in the earth as in a lake;

the diagram he draws is plainly Siamese, no less delicate than fake:

an offhandedly symmetric, stripped, systemic, wind-

wrought frame, anatomizing arteries wherein

quick sand, slow sap, the sun,

the seasons run.

His friend

says then

she sees, as well,
an organic hourglass swell,
of which one half is hidden, one twin
lives underground. Can half clocks be depended on?
Look at the moon. Think of those chiming birds who spend
their summers in such clocks, who lately daily roused his house at dawn,
yet who for some weeks now no one has seen picnicking picayunish in the grass.
They knew exactly what time it was when they heard that first soft shattering of glass.

by Ed Minus

PAISANO

The clouds still differentiate the dark.
At nearly midnight, light they incubate
makes silver nightshade bloom between the stars.

The day I saw a jackrabbit is ending
for its only time, so I know more than when
these clouds were born a blown time ago.

Midnight: the porch hovers and we lean
in chairs, with glistening bottles, move our arms,
our mouths (but not to kiss, and not to speak).

The dog boxes a June bug with his shadow
like a fox. It's Texas—now and then a star
will blaze a trail past here to where it goes,

a bird will summon Chuck Will's widow
though she'll never come, as I have called a ghost
who's lost, who's lost someone. There is no room

for that old desolation here. The house
is small, the pasture rough with things to find.
The night is kindly lit, and you are kind.

And what will happen is another day.
The rain-lily will spring beneath the wheel.
The flycatcher will poke its crested head

out of the martin house. I know the names,
and saw a scarlet wasp above the prickly pear.
I saw the place the star made when it fell.

I saw you say I love you to the dark,
and watched a fast shape dive into the light
of the rabbit-hole in Mexico, the moon.

by Maggie Dietz

EURYDIKE

Our days blossomed like flowers, and through the polyphonic pathways of colours they reached up to the sky.

Just as the month of October draws silently near with arms full of an abundance of gold from falling leaves, so too Eurydike would advance, like the smell of dried figs, to light up the slow-dying summer of Saint Dimitris.

Do you remember Eurydike, that plump neighbor of ours with her bellowing laughter and crusty grapes, like balls of coloured glass?

When the frogs with their croaking pull the night down over the green swamps of the Pedias and the cluster of the moon, hovering among the vine branches, marks midnight, then at such times Eurydike, like a goodly shadow, sets aside her own special hour to go to the orchard alongside Kamini.

With newly-awakened eyes she marvels at the eggshell brightness of the twinkling stars.

She listens to the mysterious cracking of seed in the freshly-watered field, the tremulous straining of the stalk, the underground current of the dream, the flaming quiver in the pomegranate flowers, the light scent from fallen kaisia.

She is listening. . .

Everything stays suspended between Man and God, while

the moon dangles silver violets on the outer tips of the branches of the plum tree.

Eurydike's eyes open wide like pumpkin flowers, within the drowsy mist that falls from the transparent indigo sky right down along the length of the River.

The blowing of the scented wind spreads through the channels of dreams, sounding like a music deep and unearthly, and from the chinks of the night glowworms are projected with a wailing light.

Beetles, mounted on balls of ivory, manage to radiate their own ashen-like colour. And now only the silence remains, to shine as milk does on the lips of a child.

“Ah, Deftera, a paradise. . . “

Pipis is singing, after a bout of heavy drinking again this evening at Achilleas Roussos' taverna, in company with Karamezos. He sings, and breaks the deep blue glass of the night.

Getting annoyed at the disturbance Eurydike scolds him. But then, just like a wind that stammers baffling whispers among the corn fields, she makes the sign of the cross and exclaims: “O forgive me, Lord!”

Eurydike. God bless her!

by Theoklis Kouyialis
translated by Nora Clark Liassis

WALK LAKE

There is no treasure trove where the sandstone lakebed
lay exposed.
Turnip topped salt cedar clumps wait, broken slither
sticks wait,
fetid toad stumps and clotted bumble-weeds wait to fossilize
with torpid shards of mussel pearl.
Narrow trout faces stare gape-eyed.
Wide mouthed catfish bleach in low cool sunlight.
Man litter's spread paper-plastic beer-can tentacles beside
tracks of yawping ATVs, euphoric dogs,
old sandaled-men hobbling out along the shore
leaning rubber-tipped canes deep into wizened sand.
Detergent scum reflexively licks the shore,
demeaning sandy red-green algae ridges,
ridges of sticks, of shell, and silver-pink pebbles.
Here is the place the brown deer paused
to watch the slow-dawn moonlight play
over crests, and deep between the fissures
of wind-forced wrinkling water.

by Joy Raab-Faber

WHAT THE TUNDRA HAS TO OFFER

Put your hands on this musky skin of treeless earth,
where just below the duff soil never thaws,
where willows twist knots into themselves
between hummocks and boulders

and the slow flame of a thousand
different lichens cut
an aurora into the ground,
slow and sharp as rust.

Pray for a wind that could almost knock you down—
because the black flies become a singular body
shifting with the hurried fluidity
of hunger, ready to burrow and rend

any section of your skin they can reach.
You can fill the cup of a hand with one
swoosh of sky, hold a buzzing clod of life,
and on windless days they will block the sun.

We're out here for hundreds of mies
and months, waterways and overland,
days nearly lacking nights, weeks without sight
of people but for stone men inukshuks.

Twice now we've found a fresh rotting heap
of caribou bones and fur, dribbling rot
into the water, while the warble flies
rip their way out from the egg sack belly.

It wasn't until my boots almost crushed
the ribcage that I noticed the figure,
jaw crooked on a rock—a lesson on how
bodies are put together, by showing

how they come apart—slowly becoming
scattered tufts of skin and sinew, cracked bones
revealing jaundiced and yellow marrow,
the impossible puzzle of order.

Bones are the constant here—soggy muskeg,
straight edged cliff, miles of boulder fields,
and slowly arching prairie, all empty
but for the innumerable crowds of bones.

One day as we slipped through rocky shallows
we saw our first live caribou, were amazed
it didn't move as we huddled closer,
until its neck craned around and we saw

flies walking on unblinking eyeballs,
its limbs, flimsy poles warped, threadbare skin frayed
and we felt ashamed as voyeurs to know
we had lusted and eyed its last moments.

Trivial excitement, for a life
wavering at the end, waiting to die alone
and all of us, in that moment, knowing
all that would ever remain would be bone.

by Matthew Nienow

TENTAVA LA VOSTRA
MANO LA TASTIERA

Tentatively you touched the keyboard, and paused,
scanning intently as if you knew the score
impossible to play, all the chords
suddenly tense as a throat tightened by grief.
Watching you stop the music, looking so lost

before the language that was most your own,
tenderness seemed to spread across the room.
One window was still half-open, and there it was clear
the crystalline waves were breaking, softly enough
to mutter something just beyond the frame.

Now the butterflies passed, but not before
we saw them dance across the window's azure.
A branch quivered, touched by the rays of the sun.
But nothing around us came to light in words,
and your gentle ignorance was mine, was *ours*.

by Eugenio Montale
translated by George Kalogeris

THE BROKEN ROSE

Alone in the orchard all morning
As a cool mist cleared,
I shoveled and carted gravel,
Glad no one appeared.

Pushing the cart past a locust
Rooted in long repose,
I thought I saw in a flaw of shade
Tomorrow's broken rose.

I stopped at once to catch my breath,
Save my mind from ruin,
I looked above the far-off trees
And saw the daylight moon.

Rest was still a little ways off,
But I headed in early,
Bringing the moon for you to hold
Though my hands were dirty.

by Andrew Saltarelli

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

BETWEEN 1960 AND 1963, the renowned Wisconsin writer, poet, and lecturer August Derleth (1909–1971) edited and published a magazine under the title *Hawk & Whippoorwill*. The saddle-stitch journal was devoted to poems of man and nature, and though it was simply designed, it was widely esteemed for its uncommon integrity. Contributors included James T. Farrell, John Beecher, Felix Stefanile, Carleton Drewry, and Helga Sandburg.

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the inaugural issue of the revived *Hawk & Whippoorwill*. We are grateful to have the endorsement and support of April Derleth, who is now the head of Arkham House, the publishing firm founded by her father. We are also grateful to the poets who submitted their work to this volume and to the staff whose diligence helped make the journal that you now hold possible.

For a complete masthead, contributor biographies, and other information, please visit our website: <http://bostonpoetry.com/hw/>

In keeping with the format of the original, our journal is a slim volume which keeps a tight focus on the poems themselves and on the relationship between nature and humanity. The poems speak with one another — and, we hope, to something in our readers' feelings and thoughts. Thank you for picking up a copy, and enjoy.

Sincerely,

The *Hawk & Whippoorwill* Editorial Staff

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*“a mourning dove hung
on the wire line one evening
like a long soft blade.”*

George Brooks

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