

L O G

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Nature Poems About Nature
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DANIEL
BEAUREGARD
SEEDS

There are dark and darkness. Inside an apple. Us as an apple. And the blade box. Or more importantly, the box at the end of the funhouse: an empty room containing nothing but a trunk with a mirror inside. It is us.

Matryoshka or onion both old but for lack thereof. Why not Russian doll? Block of ice or woodblock. Am I continually dissolving into myself? If there is still energy in such tiny particles there must be empty space.

Why so heavy? Our conical shapes. Nothing and everything equally heavy. Inside each fleeting dot an electrified border. Our boomeranged thoughts. Brain as yolk.

Lockbox in extended stay motel. As in we are it. In it. Star stuff.

DANIEL
BEAUREGARD
LANDFORMS

Life with the urgency of a spaghetti western. The fight is always there, right up front. Line in the dirt. Fuck it. I have 14 pieces of gold in my bag. One for each station. I'll dedicate myself to something cerulean and a clothespin when and if I need it.

O we're moving toward it--figure out a loaded word for it. You remember doing something you knew would hurt you but you followed through only afterward asking yourself what the fuck was I thinking. Watch out for that meatball.

The land is brown verbs with some prickly greens. Nights are cool. In the morning a snake in the boot.

The horizon broken open. You ran toward it with all your might, the world unfolding on just one line. I've just swindled you with this science I invented. There are many useless metaphors in a desert.

ALYSE
BENSEL

FEAST

A hawk flapped between tree and telephone wire, swooping to snap a sparrow or chickadee lured by birdseed. My parents observed, fascinated, as the hawk tore apart the tiny birds, throwing their bits down its gullet. For weeks my mother phoned: she and the cats stared at the hawk's feast; my father cleaned up the bloody feathers at the base of the tree. They found the *Audubon Guide to Birds* in my old room. The hawk weighed enough to make the plum tree sway back and forth, scattering leaves and feathers stained with blood.

CL
BLEDSOE
MONTANA

No one cares about the demarcations
of the soul unless the body has been properly

preserved. The stale, brownish spots on the brain
caused by dehydration, the vibration of seemingly

dormant particles, these can be chewed around
or simply cut out, but they won't poison

the gut. Still, they lessen taste, aesthetic appeal.
The assisted suicide of the heart when infinite

incarceration is whiffed is identifiable by the patterns
of standing hair on limbs, around ears, inside nostrils.

No one cares if you've been to Montana if you've
clearly eaten your horse. Souls are not mountains;

revelations are not landslides. Beauty is a way
of hating that which I will never be. We'll all

wear hats to hide the sunken-in-ness of our pates.
Our spurs will jingle when we walk. Some fool

will call it love until the dinner bell rings.

CHRISTOPHER
CITRO

THE TREE I
JUST LEANED
AGAINST IS
THE EXACT
AGE AS ME

I did not know this—how could I—but it's true.
The same autumn afternoon when I first yelled—
a pale orange helicopter—a comma split at the base
and a string came out, pointing itself at the light.

Being October, there was white in the sun,
and rays stretched at an angle up from the south
because it's then the sun begins its long lean from us.

The string opened two leaves, reaching—I was
waving my hands, not certain they were
mine, and a nurse stepped out of the way.
Sunlight hit my face and my eyes became brown.

ASHLEY
COLLIER

SOMETIMES

WOLVES

WILL EAT

THEIR YOUNG

I will build us a nest, and I will place it in the perfect eave. I will find a spot where one limb becomes two and makes for beautiful footing. We will be equidistant from earth and sky. I will pull dry sticks through the wide follicles of my brow and make a solid shape of them with spit and dirt and bone.

I'll put it in a Pine, and hope that Leadbelly was wrong, and the water in our pots will be boiled by the sun. You will tell me that song was by Nirvana and I will be really fucking pissed. I will do the cooking, and you will eat from my beak, and it will be sharp, but you will have no choice. You will start to grow feathers, even if you're scared to fly, and I will teach you a call that sounds like rain.

I don't know where I'll get them, but I will fill the nest with eggs. They will not hatch, at least not for a very long time. But we will place ourselves upon them, and whisper to them that if they choose to accept, we're offering them life. They will become our furniture, and you will complain that we should have gone with the Tempurpedic. I will insist that eventually, you'll like the way this feels. I will paint them. I will do it carefully.

In the Autumn, when it's grown too cold for a shell to crack, something will stir and fight its way gasping into our existence. You will tell me it is my job to feed it, that it should eat from my throat, that all the good bits will fall down your gullet if you try to chew its food. I will reply that sometimes wolves will eat their young, and I do not want to be a stay-at-home mom. We will put it aside awhile, and watch to see what it becomes.

It will heat us. We will make it through the winter by its hearth and be amazed at the expanse of its wings. Amazed at the length of its tail. Amazed at the color of its neck and spread of its feet. We will raise our ears to the breast of the thing and press our cheeks into the soft of its down. What is beating there will be enough for us to know that we should keep it.

I will find us a cave. It will be near the sea. We will discover whether waterfowl need gills. I will carve our names into the granite, we will press our bellies to the mud, and our offspring will teach us the songs of the caverns we inhabit.

DANIEL
D'ANGELO

PASTORAL

In the following weeks
I followed this one slow
Hickory everywhere he
went. I stripped all
the bark the whole
time. And I plucked
the leaves of his
and ate them—burned
parts of the woods—
left significant marks.
I collected his branches
and planted them in
places I knew he'd pass.
He'd see tree arms
climbing from the ground
and have no idea
they were his. He'd fall
one day because he had
one million axes inside
of him. When he'd turn
and start timbering
toward me, it'd be so
easy to step out of the way,
so I would, then I did.
Then I spent most
of a season (winter)
completely burying
him. I was close enough
to do that the whole winter.

LAUREN
DE PAEPE

CULT OF BIRD
& DEER

Dear dear deer. And all of me crying. When I really wanted to. When I was in love and in love not with not-you, un – abundance of lust. Killdeer'd trust in the wounded ruse of lives, lived – was I not. I *must*. I mustered up the kind of ness one needs to stand – still a stones-throw from you. Head-down and stumbling, my dogged slog through March-thick snow. Wept since the instant I hit the air I pined for – had *been* for – hit and took me in. A wet – inhalation, whet. Stone-glance-water, your arcing up the slope from my ripples, dipper. Light enough to seep. The forest with your present – Gentleness: you. Waited. You faced all your ears all opening upon me. Lifted your tail, whiter than snow, you let me know: *Yes*. Could I – surrender. Yes and yes, stood rooted before you. Downward grew until you turned. Three black eyes, your three noses. Nosing the ridge, along and on – as not upon the earth. Plate of glass lining hoof and leaf-duff – lightly, off, and were gone from my eyes. But a whiteness where I stared at the light fell away. Something in me fell into a dimple snow-free beneath a tree, my body left me. Lay furred a flicker'd thing drawn warm upon: the open-close of your breathing – close – the chest, of your dry hills.

TRACY
DIMOND

UNTAPPED
LANGUAGES
OF THE
UNIVERSE

Some nights I ignore lines
like “I’m Korean Barney Stinson”
and “I’m living proof of chivalry”
spoken by men afraid of a connection
when I only crave a confidant
to laugh with through the night.

Rehearse in front of a bathroom mirror:
everything will be just fine,
step outside to breathe the air
while Hillary points to the moon
glittering on the glass
that litters North Ave.

Buildings bare
before the touch of an artist’s hand
smirk with broken teeth
under the glowing reminder
that the cycle never pauses
so I might as well connect
with languages untapped in the haze.

The beams tell me
about weightless travels past stars,
but carrying bar room voices
interrupt the conversation.
I beg for silence
doubting it will bring peace
found in buckets of moonlight.

HOWIE

GOOD

CIRCA 1960

The truck
would come slowly
down our street
after dinner sometimes,

& all us kids
would rush outside
& run behind it
through a misting
rain of DDT.

Other times we'd just sit
along the curb
& wait for darkness
& the sputtering
green flames of fireflies.

HOWIE

GOOD

THE END

OF NATURE

You hear the high-speed drill
of the woodpecker
in the summer woods?

Me neither.

COURTNEY
HITSON

A DEAD BIRD
IN DAYCARE

I take my three year-old students to the blue and green playground where the fingers of September's easy winds stroke their hair, the air grazed by the breath of autumn. Patches of yellow light leak through the playground's stairs and catch their eye, just before the exaggerated squint. Within minutes, they have congregated in the playground's back corner, huddling over a dead robin. She lies, burnt-auburn belly up and puffed, blue-gray wings tucked neatly inwards. Glossy black eye still staring upwards at what may have remained of the earth. I cannot tell if the children are saddened or amused—their concentrated expressions probe as if digging for a thought not yet conceived. And as reddened leaves descend from overhead, that nagging sentiment surfaces through the agonized faces of decaying trees. Inside the hearts of my students, a large rock is let go, tumbling downwards to somewhere they have never been: A bird can only be a bird for so long until it is a dead bird. I cup her stiffened body and raise her from the sidewalk that's cluttered with pools of fiery leaves and place her over the chain-link fence. My students dash away one by one, faster than I've ever seen—the world suddenly chasing them at the heels.

TAMMY HO

LAI-MING

PALM TREES

I've never touched any palm trees. I've never touched you.
I'll ask somebody to plant one just for me. It will grow
erratically but thank goodness, my patience's unremitting.
I'll walk to it when I'm ready. You tell me to finger its bark
as if it were your body waking up from summer gales.
Then I'll sit in its irregular shade and contemplate
why berries sometimes earn bruises overnight;
why small fish let themselves get caught in sparse nets;
why shed skins of snakes are all curled, as though burnt.
Leaning my back on the trunk, I'll become its auxiliary bud.
I'll think of touching you. Mostly, I'll dream of snow.

NEAL
KITTLERLIN
PRAISE

It was the year we all bloomed, the year of our lord. We learned to distill the nectar dripping down in droves, to cut the sweetness with regret. We learned to genuflect in ways that brought discomfort to the masses. There were stray branches on the empty streets, calm air in the wake of a mighty wind. Exhalations abounded and ululated. Twice we trapped them in jars, but the experience grew stale, stored in the moldy basement of the Presbyterian church two blocks from our childhood home. We saw the holy ghost of our first mutt revealed in teeth marks on our shins. We stigmataed 'til dawn, placating some papal acid trip. Talking him down didn't work.

When you are famous, everyone wants to know the provenance of your scars. You are suddenly afraid to answer poison ivy. Nothing sours like god's honest truth. The first time you ate that little wafer, you smiled at your mama after because you knew the only belief you needed was hers. You gave it fully with the knowledge you would never give it again. You gave until there was nothing left. You told the preacher you were accepting Jesus Christ as your personal lord and savior just so you could see the missing digit on his hand up close. You never learned the provenance, though some said he once worked in a sawmill.

I became a master of skipping out before the consequences bloom. My feet slip and slide in complicated rhythms over the roots, but I fall forward, face bloodied. The thorns dig deep into the year of our lord. It never ends no matter how the calendar turns. Time is a spectacle designed to distract from the homespun neverending. I watch it unfold together, hope intertwining with disillusionment. I sowed the wind but let the whirlwind die in the fields, stinking with overripe. I saw the limbs swallow me, part the dirt gently, a perpetual flowering on the tip of my tongue. The everlasting year of our lord.

NEAL
KITTLERLIN
RAIN

Sometimes the words fall like rain, fill you in a way you wouldn't have guessed you were empty. Like the underdog that breaks your bracket but you cheer for them anyway. The screech of rubber soles on hardwood drains images you might have otherwise left in the attic. Think of all those factories in China churning out memories of that warm spring buzz in the air. How many systems feed on all kinds of suffering and minor triumphs just to soundtrack that moment? How much carbon released to get the temperature where it was that night in the tall grass? Best not to consider. Instead remember the way the sweat glistened on our foreheads in the unseasonable March air. No matter their faults they held you then, a belonging that went beyond those gears. Mosquitoes swarmed in such a way we surmised our skin must be sweet, our blood nourishing. Carried from station to station, insect communion, rituals glimpsed from forced perspectives. I caught one out of the air, fingers fleet, our mingled blood staining thumb and index. We were brothers then, if only for the night. Came the sweetest end, eyes tiring in sleeping bag rhythms.

DEANNA
MASSELLI

STARING INTO
THE MOUTH
OF THE
BEAST

Paddling down
the Wekiva River
alligators glide by
awaiting
the opportunity
to put their great jaws
in motion

“If you fall out, mother,
I’m not jumping in to save you.”

ROBERTO
MONTES

I MEAN
BOTANY

AND THEN
WHAT?

for Chelsea Whitton

Traffic signal flora. Physical confrontation
of flora. Teenage flora that look away
as they call you names. Flora that refuse
help like discontinued hydrants. Empathic
nod of flora. Barbarity flora. Flora circling
the pond but not because they are afraid.
Misguided disobedience of flora. Mischievous
flora mocking toddlers. Vocabulary of flora
in widening arcs of turned-away light.
Remembrance flora. Historical snark of flora.
Flora continuing the road even after
they are done. Flora that will charge
the mountain but only when we escape
the mountain. 'No more public fountain,
no more flora' flora. Suicidal flora urging
some way through the sprinklers.
You've worked here 25 years! flora.
Grave flora to join ankle flora in a season
of protest. Blushing flora laid across
the coffee table as if they knew why.
Will I have to make new friends
if all of mine continue to die? flora.

Noiseless intensity of flora. Flora craned in a neurology of fear. Flora you can't believe, and then you believe, and then it's over. Liar flora. Sexy underwear flora. We have reached consensus and you need to leave flora. Flora dappled. Flora trained for exactly this situation. Sun bending flora without expression or reach. Epileptic flora earnestly slurred. Derrida is finally irrelevant to my life! flora. Thoughtless flora bullying the baseball diamond. Flora you offer to other flora in a gesture only nurses understand. Delicate science of teasing flora. Morning hilarity of flora as you bury one family and not another. Are you ok? flora. I wasn't there? flora. No matter how hard I try I am never too late flora. Heckler flora as you mount the curb. Wasted creativity of flora. Hopelessly moved by an internet argument for flora. Embarrassment of flora. Sincerity of flora that makes everyone uncomfortable. Promise flora. Please flora. I tried my best flora. I have stolen from you but here is your reward flora

KEN
POYNER
VICTIMS
OF IDLE
EXTREMISM

The first day without polar bears
Will be a workday. I will want
Ham and eggs but I will get
Cereal. Outside it will be
Sixty-two degrees and the grass
Will be beginning too soon to grow
Into a lawn that needs mowing.
Snow, pushed into jocular
Mountains of oil and dirt and gravel,
Will still be bleeding into the drains.
Two doors down the idiot
Who beeps his horn for his car pool buddy
Will beep his horn, setting off
Two dogs and a slamming front door.
I know he must know better.
The morning paper will be behind the car:
Hopefully it won't have slipped
Entirely into the shadow of the car's trunk.
I will need to get gas within
A day or two, and I will think
About wiper blades. The weather
Will begin to turn and nothing
Can be done for it, but I will
Forget my hat, and everything will be
Just like the first day without tigers.
My packed lunch will be leftovers,
With two napkins and a superhero straw.
Every day there is less to know.

JESSE
PRADO

SITTING
ALONG
THE EDGE
OF THESE
SHORELINES

Seeing him, at the gym, working on that machine,
was weird this afternoon.

Feels like I'm going to see somebody I know out
here.

The wind is moving against seagulls and much
larger bodies of water.

Fabric of peoples' clothing makes lines in the
water.

Seagulls only shit on people when they think or
see that they have somewhere to be.

From here I can see the Oakland airport.

People come here to see planes landing and taking off.

Feels like a tourist attraction.

People come from all over to see that happening.

Seagulls move against wind.

This is her idea of a good time.

Mad, because it's working against my basketball shorts.

Making lines in them or ruffles.

Letting winds work against me, the asphalt did something.

Pretty soon these exercises will begin to feel juvenile and amateur.

Everything I'm looking at from the edge of this shoreline looks like a wallet-size photograph.

Being out there feels too much like trying to be out there.

The winds working against everything makes seeing it from behind the safety net of any car window, or house seem so much safer.

Houses set up along the other side of this shoreline make me feel like I'm in LA at the Santa Monica Beach.

Being here reminds me of things I do not want to see everyday, or things I still haven't.

Things I'm tired of seeing, or things I will never get to see is all that this place reminds me of, ever.

Can't get away from the palm, or pine trees no matter how much you hate them.

Reminds me of a big house where everyone living inside knows each other by name.

Don't play Adam Levine.

From behind this glass I can see el torritos.

It looks amazing from where I sit parked along the edge of this shoreline.

We used to go there as a family for brunch every mother's day.

This mother's day wasn't like that.

Only other time I remember going there for something, asides mother's day, was one time with my parents where I ordered a hamburger, and learned why you shouldn't ever order American at a Mexican American restaurant.

People driving vans along these shorelines usually live in them out here.

MATT
ROWAN

THE TREE
STUMP

The tree was now just a stump. Somebody cut it down.

Somebody cut it.

It got what it deserved, probably.

What it deserved was to be cut down. Which makes you wonder: was it just for the wood? Is that why it got cut down?

But nobody cuts for wood, right or wrong? Maybe to burn the wood and therefore stay warm.

But we've got lots of ways of staying warm. It's summer, that's a good way to stay warm.

So, probably not for its wood. Probably it was for much deeper things, deep-seated things that led to its being cut down. Cut down in the prime of tree life.

Certainly not for its being a whore. That's just nuts. Trees aren't whores. Even if that makes a person wonder. It's crazy, just crazy. But...nah, just crazy.

It would have to be something else.

It had probably gotten in the way.

“Of progress” is the obvious answer. Progress is the obvious thing to blame for the tree’s being cut down, what it “got in the way of.”

But there was no progress around the stump, none.

Unless you count grass as progress, because there was nothing but grass around the stump.

And a broken bottle, which if anything, signals entropy, which might be progress’s opposite.

As for the tree-turned-stump, my guess is it got in the way of an automobile and its driver, both too big to be stopped by a tree. One little tree in a world of millions.

PAIGE
TAGGART

BRAVED
THE SEA

barely feel mountain
came a small hill of smelling salts
backwashed the sand and contrived a circle
portrayed on the back of my vest
a wood cabin with a red blue jay inside
saw a man's face and another and another
kept perfume inside the room
tried to imagine the world without him but nobody
 would pay attention
kept traveling with or without a sense of time or direction
felt the way to my mind was best perceived through
imaging a small child under a microscope, a specimen
 on a plain glass slide
the scientist studied his eyes for specks of grey and
 some looked just like sea salt
and I could have sworn I tried to show them to him but
he could not see indefinitely
he could not see that far ahead
he could not see that his eyes came from columns of
 sea splitting
he could not see that he was bigger than the ocean

and the ocean has a bunch of fucking fish swimming
around

I put an eye up to his eye, it sure shined the same length
a ton of boats and one lollygagging submarine
one contrived reference for love caught sail of a ship
where a dreward celebrating The Ceremony of Mud
marched like Dred Scott to his grave
everyone was trying desperately to wrap a flag
around him

I didn't care about the weather or rare varieties of
plumage

I was mesmerized by the solidarity in his vessel and
caught the intrigue to sail

I can't claim to have *ever* been at arms with the Supreme
Court nor struggled

with the Diversity of Citizenship, I still see a ton of
gorgeous boats and maintain a small installation of an
organized court order, I don't see a lot of things coming
my way

I use the hook to catch my fish and the severance to pay
for it

DAVID
TOMALOFF

THREE
SISTERS

THE
DRAGONFLY

“In the sun she warmed her wings and listened to cicadas sing.”—Neil Fallon

I followed the dragonfly into a clearing & then underneath a log. A somewhat startled fox held out to me a paw containing nothing that I could see. I feigned a choice of three so as not to offend my handsome host; this richly coated fox; this comely steward of the log. Past the oak on the left is where I again picked up her trail—this dragonfly, an airship—& how every claw & antler for miles offered warnings of my approach. Over *Old Blessed Creek* we hopped & we waded. We hurried, & we climbed. We scaled to the top of the hill, where lay the graves of three young girls & beyond them there, a house. So impressive in its skeletal frame—*this* barely standing, & *this* rather staggering—doing its best to shade the plot where three small sisters once did fall. There on the what-was mantel, my dragonfly, she sat perched. The creek rose up to kiss the banks behind me; it held me to the ground, & so I knew I could not pass. My guide, she then lifted her body & implied a benediction—became the vanishing point that rose between the meadow & the celestial field above.

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