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POETRY

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POETRY

Three Takes on a Weekend

James G. Moore

1. Stiffed

You figure your worth by work trees, agendas,
Blisters and bruises, calloused thoughts,
Sore back and legs, headaches, and fatigue,
While your fingers grasp for any hold
On self. Oh, yes, you sense the lies,
But you cannot voice them safely
As sweat equity and thought equity
Plant you at work and make you bear up anger.
Your rage flowers as your inner self withers.
You cannot breathe, so you key down,
Suffer gladly the cost and accept the check,
And keep living a grind and hustle.
Rooted, you figure your worth, stiffed.

2. The Move

We moved the quarter-ton granite bench with
its two separate granite supports, you with MS
and me with Bladder Cancer. We used a two-
wheeler whose tires flattened out as it moved
oh so slowly, and we used your truck which
rode so low on its springs. What else were
we supposed to do to get the stone seat to my
backyard from yours but use the leverage that
we found open to us. The bench was too heavy
to carry any distance except to lift the seat
from atop the legs to the ground and then back
up again, and we did. Now we know everything
is possible.

3. Bird Shadow

The bird shadow crosses a patch of sunlight
And begins your uplifting in your garden
As you sit on a granite bench waiting still
For some convoluted sign
Where you have tended to think.
When the bird lands in the crabapple branches
And dances branch to leaf to twig,
You lift your eyes lightly to catch glimpses
Of its feathered wish for flight, fulfilled,
And you find hope, a precious thing, feeling
Air in your breast, seeing light
As though for the very first time.
Again.



*James G. Moore is Part-time
Faculty in the Department of
Communication Studies.*

Two Poems

Deborah Nemko

Gnarled and bumpy
Gliding
Across a surface, ragged with age and drought
“Planted that here maple ‘bout 50 years ago”
He says with amazement
Certain of nothing else
But the moment
Of growth
and birth
And certain death

They were wandering
Mixed up
here and there
“Where you headin’ to?”
Obscene to think so
Lost
at least enough to notice
This turn and that centrifugal force

a life



*Deborah Nemko is Professor
in the Department of Music.*

Word and I Panteha Sanati

I take a word
-an evolutionary treasure-
turn it inside out
sideways and down
look under it
above it
Consider its ancestors
Genesis
Relatives
-Even its legacy-
A/ways its timeline

I weave with it
covering everything in sight
I braid my time with it
Color my thoughts with it
Conjure love with it
Call and cajole it
I let it name my memories

I find it between the pages
I lose it in a mountain of books
Then I find it and hold it tight

I macerate it
let it marinate me
and season my life with it
I dress it up,
then dress it down.
I hold it
in my hand,
in my eyes,
in my throat,
on my tongue

I write it on my skin
then wash it away in the shower
watching the parts dilute away
and occasionally,
a c dangling on my earlobe
an x tangled in my hair

But eventually,
they disappear down the drain
only to meld with other letters
colliding into random words in some creek
forming sentences in a river
and floating in all earthly waters
then, vaporized messages
reaching the cold sky
rain back on me

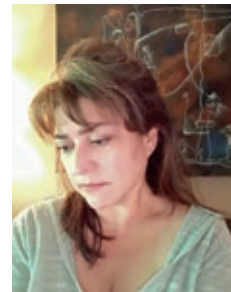
I hang a word up to dry
I plop it on the cold screen
or a lined piece of paper
I say it a thousand times
I utter it and mutter it
This way and that way
I send it away
with a return address
To: myself

I interrogate it
Then hold it in my palm
I use it as a lure, a tent and a guide-dog
But I always fold it
and keep it near my heart
I tease it
Test and tickle it
I beg it
Cut it open
Sew it back up

I throw it against the wall of sentences
Tuck it between punctuation marks
Introduce it to other words

I kiss it to coax it out of its shell
Push it away
Pull it back to me
Try it on for size
Take it to bed
I dream with it

I let it mold my brain
And let my brain hold it
I guess I love it
this precious poignant present-
letting me plop it on any surface
So you know
What I am talking about



*Panteha Sanati is Part-time Faculty
in the Department of English.*



Installation #3 by Douglas Breault.