

Andrew Weatherly

Bruised Knees

Hearing my mother say
“call the police, son, and tell them
these people are trying to kill me”
was such a release from her absence as a mother
To learn that your ‘mother’ isn’t
the fifty-one years of your acquaintance
after her gall bladder was excised
is such a relief for the grief of her leaving
She no longer has to have:
biblical bounds on how to love;
paradoxical beliefs against Mexicans working America
while she is working Mexico;
my inability to help her across three thousand miles
It means that she has at the end of her life
become her own mother
often incarcerated
believing gas was being pumped into her room
It means that nothing hateful is true
(though is anything true anymore?)
beyond liver disease and a terminal diagnosis

And the hopes and dreams and aspirations
of this linguist who lived on scriptural parables
are reduced to spoonfuls of creamy peanut butter and bone broth
and her west coast sun setting consumed by ocean
with nothing left to forgive because
she cannot remember much less forget
And the final gasps of her cells opening
after being locked with only power left
to eat to drink or to not
not even power to die or to see
beyond her fingertips
not even her bruised knees
from falling and not asking for help

A Little Rain

It is a strangeness how a little rain
can turn autumn woods from lovely to magnificent
sandy grass glassing to translucent
baby green oak trees growing on you
beeched yellow yearning deep to burn ultraviolet
sourwood salmon to swim in bloody seas
and maples flame to their hearts' content
dripping clear serum
It's not just dirt washed away
but a new lens added to see that water runs our veins
even as leaves die
and trickle away

Shadows Open Eyes

sun slanting through morning woods
golden glow illuminating spider's web silver
burning leaves on edge
between bright light and smoky shade
sun blinding staring eyes down into submission
to eat dirt fallen leaves broken twigs
But the shadows invite
opening up looking around
white black bars blinking strobing
views through scrubby jack pine
blackberry brambles caning pricking
eyes stretching to see deer
ears watch crunching tiny feet
It is the dark opening eyes
granting vision

Untie

It's not threads of hair
lurking in bathroom cabinet
after I returned her hairbrush:
those are explicable
Nor on her pricey pillow
encased in dull yellow
stuffed under bed forgotten
she slept here many times
It's in the Mexican blanket
I keep for outside
to lay on earth
and stare at stars bathe in sun
that I am surprised
finding a lost curling dark strand
woven matted in complex bright patterns
It's in the novel travelogue
night tabled for sleepless evenings
to darken my eyes
that rare silver curving line across
creamy pages
marks when I opened the book a year ago.
Cleaning faded blue couch
white flowers darkening
mining pennies and pencil stubs
crumbs from suppers past
a pair of black filaments entwined

have wedged themselves under pillows
into forgotten libraries
where Virgil and Dante debate judgments
detailing aspects of Purgatory
and the hard steps leaving the Bardo
In each strand of protein and DNA
I untie hopes
I release doves to find land
to return with olive branches
and a future
one by one