



JACLR

Journal of Artistic Creation & Literary Research

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Three Poems

**Small Horse Living Near
Jackie Street Spur Trail,
Grayson County, Virginia**

I gave him a stick of chewing gum
because he'd gnawed at my fingers
with flat teeth curious for bugloss.

He walked with us into the woods
and waited at the shaded perimeter,
shaking gnats from his head with his head.

We did not give him a name.
We have not seen him again.
He let us take one photograph:

I'm wearing fishing waders and a purse;
he is wearing nothing but his knowledge
of his unmappable occurrence and place.

One cannot expect the revelation

of small frogs leaping into waters,
of animal medicine every moment,

but all I know of silver strings
and sacred geometry has come
from dogs or gregarious horses,

or flowers of a single moon:
here, then kempt by mowers;
this moment known, then gone.

The Raw Materials of Revolution

Yes, of course, but it only seems that way;
for instance, take the grape, which can become, well,
you know all the things it can become (Riesling, Chablis, etc.);

how much of that is aging, how much of it
the worm-munched Etruscan soil and the billionaire sun?
The simplest things I know are century-wrought;

even the first seeds of water rode comet-back at the beginning.
Time supplicates the tomato, and it supples;
supplicates the broth, and it congeals;

supplicates the core of the earth, which crystalizes;
then someone supplicates the cornfields, and the quartz turns up,
which later shakes methodically in the everyday timepiece.

I am always surprised by surprises revolution brings, by
that one in us who is never prepared for the death of the elder,
who cannot understand the acorn when the acorn falls.

But let us not be so metaphysical for a moment;
it is a great privilege to escape moment, to be
in the simple be of the elemental compounds. But

when the workers stormed the battleship Potemkin,
or the redneck army took up shotguns in the coalfields,
or whenever the disenfranchised break store windows,

whether over American injustice or Parisian austerity,
wherefore this great shock and lamentation, as if the cancer
that took so suddenly was never festering? Colonials

were taxed a hundred years, and took it, before Boston;
and your neighbor suffered her husband's drunks
for it seemed that long before she gutted him. So

do not tell me you do not know why the large kid
hit the small man. And when or where you dispense of him
don't talk to me about the largeness as his responsibility.

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Feed on vinegar. Feed on vinegar, ask for water, receive
gazpacho, as it was rumored the Romans fed Jesus on the sponge.
You too would do the very things all of these students did.

For The Birds

Apparently, ten thousand years ago,
 if the dream he had of crows was true,
he flew over a valley much like this.

There were still people there,
 but chestnuts then, and buffalo
and every hill a little higher then.

And whatever he knew
 he knew a different way. But
now he has no wings but the ones

he makes from thought and plexiglass,
 and now he has no way of going over
everything the way he once did,

with old wing knowledge.
 But what of that? He knows
he's shed a thousand knowledges,

each one worthy for a while, in its while.
 But he knows now no one waits
to drown your memories in liquor

when you die. The self casts off the self.
 I am my own Meng Po, and I do not need
to fly like a crow anymore.

Bioprofile of the author: Matt Prater is a poet and writer from Saltville, VA (US). Winner of both the George Scarbrough Prize for Poetry and the James Still Prize for Short Story, his work has appeared in a number of journals both in his home country (*Appalachian Heritage*, *drafhorse*, *The Hollins Critic*, *James Dickey Review*, *Now & Then*, *Still*, *Town Creek Poetry*) and internationally (*The Honest Ulsterman*, *The Moth*, *Munyori Literary Journal*). He is currently an MFA candidate in poetry at Virginia Tech.

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