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[Born into the Wry, Eocenic Tomfoolery of A]

James Solheim

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Two Poems · *James Solheim*

BORN INTO THE WRY, EOCENIC TOMFOOLERY OF A
KEMMERER, WYOMING MAGICIAN'S FAMILY, HE MANAGED A
THIRD-DECADE TRANSLATION IN HIS LOVE OF PLACE,
DISCOVERING IN SHADOW-STRIATED BANK BENEATH THE
SCALING REDWOODS AN INVERSE AND BALANCE TO THE
BUTTES WITH THEIR FOSSIL FISH LIKE STAMPED-OUT
SOUVENIRS (WHICH IN FACT OFTEN BECAME SOUVENIRS,
GIFTSHOPPED AMONG TAIWAN TOMMYHAWKS, HAND-TALL
GAG OUTHUSES, FAWN-TOPPED PENNYBANKS ("I AM JUST A
LITTLE 'DEAR' / BUT I CAN CURE YOUR WOE / IF IN THIS
SLOT / UPON MY TOP / YOU DROP SOME OF YOUR
'DOE'"))—AND SO YOSEMITED, MILES FROM HOME, HE
LEARNED THE LIFE OF THE PURELY VERTICAL, MEDIATING FOR
THREE DECADES BETWEEN PARK AND PEOPLE, NEVER ONCE
CURSING THE FAMILYDAD WORKING A NABISCO SUGARWAFER
OUT THE TOP OF A CAR WINDOW IN THE HOPE OF
RECEIVING ON THE GLASS A VENEZUELA OF BEARSLOBBER
(SEAL OF THE TRUE YELLOWSTONER (OUR FRIEND WORKED
YELLOWSTONE A DECADE TOO)) OR THE KID KEEPING A TOO-
SMALL TROUT ON A STRINGER MADE FROM AN OLD STRIP OF
CLOTH AND SOME WIRE (BUT NEITHER WAS HE THE GULL OF
POACHERS), FINALLY DYING SLUMPED BEARLIKE INTO THE TOP
OF AN AMERICAN GARBAGECAN AND THEN BURIED EARTHWISE
(BACKHOE CHOPPING THROUGH SHALE) IN HIS BELOVED
RANGER'S UNIFORM, GREEN WITH THE TALL YELLOW PINE
HIS EPAULET: HIS FINAL WISH THUS BRINGING ONENESS
FROM HIS TWO LOVES, AS IF DEATH HAD PRODUCED HIS
ONLY CHILD

archaic feasts, beneficences

blackballed!

America in your car

beneath the rickety, disingenuous, and
waxes of the god

the tree was dragged to the pep rally, where
effigied abstractions died in foreign jerseys,
lynching become shrieky teen expression. The next

ears and sealants

for the millionth

buttprint in (we must cover great realms

to get there, so I can't tell you more)

the thirty-second kid

a datum

and others

(looking down past the distended belly she saw the earlier
child panicking with a chip of salt)—therefore

Baxter?

and thus the child entered school for the first time,
carrying his dear little naptime mat. Upon his
return home he discovered the great elm gone, the
fractured light into which his ball often twirled
now chainsawed and dragged cabled to the pep rally
bonfire by a large truck notable for its thick
hair of grease

It was desert there weren't many elms

but did the little nursemaid know

great bears walked earth then

years later

and he saw it—

“that awkward aeon”

of tangerine light, of lemonade rooms

, Fred

pronounced “dreadful”

it was a basement room, or air thick with mold's coughed

aether on your collar

and the lonesome dorm room was fishy with light—

remember this phrase: “radio—that fringed anesthetic”;

that night he twirled through the static fizz to

his favorite show, last of the dramas, forgotten on

some vertigoed corner of the electromagnetic

spectrum where the top forty wouldn't fit—and the
show wasn't there, so it meant his parents were
dead and he was on this ripped island of college in
the dark, the last place left in the universe, "w/"
industrial nostalgia

Beetles roared

over the dead squirrels, those heavy texts
of the highway

like mink stoles floating above drowned socialites

"Hell," he said—beefing it

Merrimac had it and the man's secret decoder visor
expeshally for card playing

ruddy
grooved

and the old photos showed a big elm's shadow
across his cowboy legs, giddy Crocketting child
wavering in shadowstrands, the light too gritty
in him as if he knew the elm would be energy

"WILD LIFE BALLOGIST!"

it was like they'd never heard of biology

there

in the tan neutral shale, chipping souvenirs out of
rock (just right to put on decorative gold stands
(his father always wore goggles: "a rock chip in
the eye is painful, son, right painful." Do you understand

sylllogisms

jasmine is affected by syllogisms, this is a fact
of the great apes who will roam between them
aerosol rabbits

flings they had had had had bad vibes

he stated reluctantly, stroking his small, round goatee:

that winged etymology

heretofore referred to as 'a = a + 1'

the will being unwrapped of a decorum

Yogi and Booboo, "yr" (yer) friends

he had to learn the wild order, which was not

sweet or decimated—and thus he had: had
learned the straying of beef, the beef of the
bear's hug, how to allow the metal intrusions
of use in certain sectors, erecting barriers
which could be traversed only through
dedication and knowledge and proper forms

seat of the intellect

(This is all very smart and sensible.)

and the gun emerged ever so slowly, parting the red
velveteen curtains like a liver
the small man who loved scars
erector sets cracked “allover”
he jinked—

Cornish couples combat it

names were locations

—eating the map, he quickly stoked her languishing nipples—
and the Men in her blood began their march
red and puckered, he fell to those mumblety
declensions of the bestroked, talking like Gene did
if you recall, out of one side of the mouth, the
other pulled slack, and soon he could say nothing,
submitting to lukewarm couch baths in which she
petted him like a porpoise (he had become that
alien) but neither of them were unfulfilled, gross,
or humiliated, bodymaintenance quickly becoming
comfortable act (anything can become comfortable (and
how quickly!) in love), she humming with that abstracted
cheerfulness as she rinsed him (he aware of vague
bears, and of someone far off stroking him (which was
like hearing distant waves repeated till subliminal),
he also half-thinking—or one-tenth-thinking, or
one-twentieth—himself back at the park one sun-day,
the gray small sculpture of a chewing gum balanced
on his lip, his arm around her by the Chevy))

America in carnauba
indefatigable