

Kevin T. McEneaney

Color Code

Plumes of smoke rise over Najaf
and a house burns vividly orange
off to the right of the screen--
a moving photography
that locates reality
elsewhere and in some telescopic way
places it in the language of nowhere,
on the surface of the lit moon.
Nothing to worry about
unless you're grieved about
the price of gas glugging into your tank.
Death estimates remains abstract stats.
The wounded get medical attention.
It's all half-a-world away
while the American Empire sits secure
on orange alert,
implacably content with its paranoia.

When Lively

Conversation stamps a dance
without a set pattern
although it will set patterns
improvised in the moment
patterns of association
and linked ideas
moving like spears of sunlight
or the index of a book
or the diagram of a vault
that opens to wealth
the participants can't imagine
because good conversation
remains a conception
like the kicking growth
of an abdomen pregnant
with a child who will
cry out with surprise at birth
in first conversation
with all who are present
at the sheer wonder
of what the human voice
can do

Facing the Whirlwind

These hurricanes batter the Florida Keys,
wrecking their way to Carolina,
wringing the marsh Jersey coast,
sputtering out near Casco Bay.
Under gray skies I lie abed
listening to the pelting rain of Bonnie
work her magic torrential irony
on birches, maples, and dripping locusts
abutting my country cottage,
far from the epicenter of storm
that uproots autos and boats,
flinging them like twigs afloat
a river hellbent to cataracts.
Such welkin lathering and aftermath
of sodden walls and decorative mold
begs the eternal question of why
strife always seems to lie
at the eye of the hurricane
that is our life, the narrow lane
we navigate amid jutting rapids
until we smash and, yes, die,
yet to sink in such gloom is to deny
what struggling life remains all about--
that inner gust blowing counterpoint
to all bleak disasters and leaks,
defying the interminable downpour,
believing in the coming clear sky
whose healing blue voices reply to *why*.

The Hook

Tossing caught sunnies back to the still lake
with dragon flies flitting about loose strife,
my boys in shorts take sheer delight
in this near-pointless activity
with glaring sun gleaming off
the green scum of the long lake
and my brown spaniel panting
as if he had just run a hundred yards
as passing autos slow down
to gawk at our pastoral idyll,
I recall similar days of idle
mooning about blue reservoirs
and being chased away by cops
who perhaps feared we'd drown,
so I enjoy the odd wave of hand
a passerby might friendly signal,
wondering about how brutal life
can at times appear uncomplicated
as a bee buzzing touch-me-not,
two white butterflies fluttering a love ballet in air,
or two boys bent to the ground hooking worms.

Footsteps

Mild sweet spring in Assisi
where stone steps spiral upward
vertical dizziness constructing
both labyrinth and allegory
where to arrive from radiant sunshine
into stunning underground chapel
with thousands of candles flickering
bringing your knees to crumple in wonder
where to look up and stare at Giotto's frescoes
and feel that the divine gazes upon you
as you amble about the church
where the holiness of the monks
makes debauches sheepish
where bone relics and saints
appear as part of a liminal landscape
where the transubstantiation of Chianti
tastes better than in Rome
where poppies run riot in the long valley
below the august monastery
where I never felt so happy
kneeling in bleak darkness
where the unbeliever should make a pilgrimage
where the penitent should climb to the top of the town
where the believer should discover the beauty of belief
Saint Francis loved
the trajectory of the sparrow
the heft of a heron's egg
the wiggle tail of stream trout
the slowness of a snail
sunlight on blue lichen
green neck of the sunflower
lost feather of a quail
It was a revelation to later ages
that a saint could love beauty
and see that love as the hand of God
gentle upon
grass
clouds
wind