

## **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