

Magic Poems for Sixfold April 23, 2014

Magic

A parakeet rescued from a muddy puddle,
wet and weightless, lived with me
for seven years speaking a kind of abracadabra.

Often I tried to get him on the postal scale
to see how much he weighed,
but magic, I decided, could not be measured.

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The Congresswoman

She cut her fingers
off
using 28 strokes.
One for each knuckle.
Had to plan ahead
for when she couldn't grasp the cleaver.
Said: Now I can't be held responsible
for what slips through my fingers.

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Doughnuts, Buicks, Puppies

Love is like a doughnut. A couple devours
the sweet fried dough on the outside. But there's a big hole

in the middle. Soon, they chew through to the center.
One of them wants more but the other is no longer hungry.

Now, they see how big the emptiness is inside.
They run outside to their _____ and escape into the night.

Still, they suffer through days of painful loneliness.
They buy _____ to ease their misery. One day, after

their hearts have forgotten how big the hole in the middle was,
they see another box of _____ on the shelf . . .

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Night Shift

Mabel works two shifts at the old age home,
loading weightless bodies like fliers onto silver bedpans

destined for heaven. Who else will take care of you in Florida
when you're alone, in your 80s? She forestalled foreclosure

but the repo-man took her Chevy. Still smoking, hard drinking,
working the night shift of her generation.

Coming home at dawn she wants to dance into the morning,
the way it used to be. But her three husbands and five brothers

are long gone, her two sons life-long petty criminals. Her lawn
gets mowed when one of them shows up hungry and sober.

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Stain

Caretakers on the island hate the pelicans
because they have to carry pressure washers

down to the docks every day to clean off
their shit which flares up silver like a blessing

in the glare of sunlight. They curse the birds
in Spanish as they try to blast it away,

and go home to their wives, tired and wet
with the spray in their faces, complaining:

"Ay mierda, the birds live better than we do
because nothing we can do erases the stain."