

## **Careful Wonder**

A decade ago  
a friend told me  
he'd killed another man.  
Partly for hate  
and partly from rage.  
He was never caught.

He said this with reflection,  
like describing a video  
of his birthday party  
He told in confidence,  
a confidence I've kept.  
For he's a friend of a sort,  
truer than many.

He's caring and diligent  
and speaks in quiet tones  
The beast that tore at him  
slumbers.  
But in meeting strangers I wonder  
if they, too, can extinguish.

## **The Deer Chase**

The dog has jumped a deer  
and crashed into the woods.  
He did the same a week ago  
and drove the doe just past my arms,  
with glance to say I'd missed.  
I give no yell or whistle  
to call him back to heel  
for hunting is his freedom  
though he's never caught a deer.  
The thickets block all sight and sound  
of hurtling, furry shapes, and so  
I wait in silent dusk for him  
to trot, all burrs and pants,  
in toward the useless man,  
who cannot join the chase.

## **Outward Bound**

I'm tethered to others

by lines I disdain.  
Wishing no one's help,  
asking no one's advice,  
seeking no one's closeness.

Time a rope's length away  
is comfort and peace.  
Sharing no one's delusions,  
solving no one's problems  
coddling no one's ego.

But when the cords unbind  
in woods or mind,  
Fearing no one's reachable,  
worrying no one's aware,  
panicking no one's helpful

I scurry toward contact  
and grasp for connection.  
Clutching for even a stranger's touch,  
for even a harsh look,  
for even a curse in recognition.

### **God's New Clothes**

So little left of the old garments.  
The fewer and older priests  
face us robed in apologies.  
Shrill tailors of God's message.  
Costumed nuns have died away  
replaced by off the rack laity.

The churning suits and dresses  
That draped across the pews  
have worn thin and sparse.  
And churches are cast off  
Like Good Will overcoats.  
And strictures are raggedly observed.

Yet some of us still wear faith,  
Displaying hand-me-downs in a church  
no longer fashionable.  
We're not dressed as we were,  
and unsure of holy style,  
but hopeful of our future ensemble.

