

What May Follow

What He Made

There was a boy who left school
for what work he could find,
there were factories, the first

filled with great blocks of ice,
another factory, another, until
at nineteen the night train

to art school, paints, sable brushes,
a copy of *Color* with advice:
“plenty of hard work, an active

studious mind.” Another factory,
another, wife and children,
the War, the last factory not cold

but hot, great uncut sheets
of window glass to stack,
Color at the back of a drawer.

There was a man, here in my hand
is *Color*, in my hand a cloudless sky,
tempera on cardboard, its borders

flaked away, a treetop gone,
here is a farmer, his face featureless,
here the sturdy horses pull the plow,

here the furrowed field that spans
a pot metal frame, here in my hand
the man and what he made.

Meeting Mr. Gropius

Bauhaus architects Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer designed
the Aluminum City Terrace in New Kensington, PA (1942).

Let's say it's 1964, you stop by,
Mr. Walter Who. A child, I sit

where the beauty is, in buttercups,
my eyes on the creek, the lizards

that sun there, your eyes
on the row house behind me,

economy built into its design
for factory families like mine.

Mornings like this one I let go
the learned art of moderation,

bottom bunk, a dresser drawer,
for what grows wild outside.

Let's keep it 1964, but I stop by
your own house, light and space

and stairs like none I've ever seen,
their curvy grace a wonder

like morning glories on a fence
vining up and then beyond.

What May Follow

First to flower on the planet,
companion to conifers, ferns,
and dinosaurs, magnolias
line my Pennsylvania street.

Some years with one late frost
unfurled blossoms lie fallen
as brash forsythia spills yellow.

Other years spring spares us,
the magnolia lifts its blossoms
pink against gray sky, gracious
gesture of sturdy majesty.

In a week wind scatters petals
and our disappointment, until
like dots in time they fade
to welcome what may follow.