

Bayside sighting

Spanish moss drip redbugs into oak bench weathered cracks below the sun's waning edge that cuts through the cooling bugs and sends sunbathers and swimmers and baitfish skittering from the waters tepid. The corpuscular memory of winter hides deep in the viscera, clinging to nerve endings dried by heat, occasionally letting go and floating until memory becomes brisk. No sliver of sun remains but we feel its westward dropping as slow or fast as daylight disappears, trapping cicada screams in treetops before we hear it.

We've no memory of springing to life, full force at one another. From a distance someone might've thought we were fighting or loving—neither of us cared.

We stare at it, our arms wrapping one another. I feel your heat, smell fear in your alcohol breath, your scream hooked in my ear. I shiver against you feeling its voice pulsates our skin.

We feel it floating, humming, vibrating against us, our voices as lost in its as the cicadas' songs.

Who all sees this? Who all hears this? Who wo all feels this?

We do. It does.

The throbbing hum grows louder and higher, palpitating our insides, shaking our vision, electric hair, faceburn, eyes watering.

And it's gone.

But still

we saw it.

*While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core. "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" – WB Yeats*

Vernal Equinox, 2019

Today, at 5:58 pm, Eastern, the sun will cross the equator.

No spectacular feat considering the whole of celestial movements.
Yet on the island the tide will peak, losing an inch or two of its reach,
falling so slowly we will not notice. The radiant heat that warms
the sloughs will drop, causing baitfish to swim a little more shallow
and sand fleas to dig a bit deeper. Bayside casts of hermit crabs will skitter
from the edge of one briny flat to the next, chasing their scrim of light
until it disappears completely.

After 40 years, I still hear the smooth-crested tide fall along the gulf side.

I hear it year-round and more loudly than ever before—
early autumn amid the rustling of dry twisting corn stalks,
or in the rattle of late forgotten bean pods quivering in winter's wind.
I hear the crush of waves and feel the salty spray stick to my skin
when staring out at cottonwood seeds billowing in early June.
And by the pond with cattle shoulder-deep, I hear the bay water slip against the sand,
sliding along the beach's back, just before its curled edge folds into itself
and surrenders once more.

I too, hear it in the deep heart's core.

Night tide shibboleth

nightly whispers rouse
 shorelines raising seafoam that
 a curling hand slaps back
and she murmurs again in her sleep
 undertones pull away though
 dampening shores predict more
to come depositing seldom seem life
 bespeckling the glistening foreshore
desired or not she will share all
 in spilling breakers
 eventually tiring
falling asleep
 and waking with a surge

Miss Patsy's cycle of samsara

Janie, in my American Lit, shared that her father's dead beagle, Ralph, came back six months later as a golden doodle whom she named Curly because of his beautiful furls and ringlets. Her former roommate, Beth, spent part of her gap year backpacking in Tibet where a monk named Chodron affirmed: dogs and cats do reincarnate – sometimes as humans.

Miss Patsy drapes the windowsill, warm in radiant dust. Perhaps she was Blavatsky, stretching out on the divan exhausted from conjuring for the rubes. Maybe later Margaux, padding bikini-clad about Papa's with a few dozen polydactyl cousins, or Dr. Blackwell giving the gents what's for and healing the sick anyway. She might've been Madam C.J. who no doubt could afford to recline with all such presumptuousness.

Eliot would thrill them and might remind them that a dog's a dog, a cat's a cat, but Buddha, oh Buddha, has seduced them away from all that.