

## Seeing Ghosts

In Del Ray Beach the sound of trains  
seems never to cease. The Atlantic coast  
winter weather blew down on the Gulf.  
Manatees gather in Tampa Bay for warm  
waters discharged by the Electric Company.  
Mammals may suffer a cold stress  
syndrome. So, too, sea turtles—who  
float like they are dead. Rescuers  
check them with sonograms for life signs.

I search for the heron of the Holy Ghost,  
sighted once at Sebastian Inlet. No room  
at the inn. Full of wedding guests. Church  
across the highway. Darkness. No place  
to sleep. Moved on to Melbourne. Sunday  
missed Mass. Drove all day with guilt.

A white bird serves as sentinel beside  
the causeway off the island. White egrets  
roost in a tree, solitary in a marsh, like souls  
atoning in purgatory. Lonely waves swim  
in at low tide seeking sanctuary. The hush  
of the sea resonates in my ear, repeats.

Cuban food in St. Augustine at the Columbia  
Restaurant. A mojito like Papa in Havana.  
Rice and black beans: Christians & Moors.  
Facing the ocean at Saint Simons Island,  
we watch shrimpers at night in boats  
full of lights—out beyond the breakers.

Rose to watch dawn spread horizontal  
light across the end of the world. Low blues  
rise to streaks of peach & gold before the fog.  
A ship sounds a fog horn. Sun labors all  
morning to birth new light. A great grandmother  
watches & waits for word of new life. Matriarchy.  
Suddenly, a citrus fragrance envelops us driving,  
chills, goose flesh. Doe runs by with her fawns.  
A buck gives chase. Meanwhile, sea cows  
flock with their calves in the Crystal River Refuge.

## All Souls Day

Angel Trumpets have gone to ground.  
Crows replace songbirds. Hawks scan, prey.  
Yesterday, at Mass for All Saints  
I prayed for those I buried. The priest  
raised a large host, white as a funeral pall.  
Holy communion shone like a full moon.  
Father, Mother, Wife, Mother-in-Law—  
all underground on the Day of the Dead.  
Mourning doves can no longer mourn.  
Granddaughters wore costumes and masks.  
Autumn woos bowlers to the green..  
Leaves hang on with mums, extend the season.  
Sunday we fall back to prolong the light.  
Tarnished leaves. Church bells peal in worn patina.

## ***November, Day Before Thanksgiving***

Pillow talk. Skin on skin. Morning.  
I make coffee, she showers, truck growls,  
stops to pick up trash. A dozen  
or so angel trumpets—late blooms—  
dangle, play down the sounds. Oak  
trees send yellow notes to the ground.  
She cuts a large red cabbage, mixes  
slaw with Malbec, seasons, boils, frees  
aromas, saves dish for dinner tomorrow.

Dead leaves in gutter. I remember  
the smell of burning leaves.  
Yesterday, I stepped on acorns  
as I walked to the gallery  
at Sacred Heart to view the art:  
paintings of landscapes, dirt roads,  
back yards, back roads, muted colors  
left in the earth, a heather-like texture,  
a skein, threads of woven gray wool,  
bruised purple, faded green.

## ***The View From My Study***

I live in an aviary to study  
towhees feeding on steel cut oats.  
I watch from my squares of glass,  
my windows on the world show how bloody

life in the woods can be.  
Some creatures seek lowdown sanctuary.  
They nest under porches, or in bushes.  
In a steady drizzle she combs muddy

pine straw for grubs to feed her babies.  
We cannot see the thousand tunes the male  
knows and keeps in his heart to sing  
including warnings, a wide variety.

Silent predator in a broken tree  
attracts scoldings; hawk lifts off, leaves.

## ***Denver Alley***

We are close to the Continental Divide.  
We are near the depot of a railroad  
whistling travelers on a Zephyr to L. A.

The marble lobby is from a quarry  
gone as long as miners. A voyager paints  
a boxcar as a nomad, a migrant—

peripheral as Street People come for legal  
weed. Sun settles early; November light runs out.  
Urban renewal leaves alleys alone in smoke.

Sun never dispels all shade or shadows  
from the split city blocks, a bookstore's backsides.  
Alleys show dark sides, blind canyons, boxed in.

Runnels of snow melt crawl the canyon floor.  
An alley is the last valley reflecting the last light.  
Red bricks are a wet trail; moonlight pools.

As the Rockies split our continent,  
so the sun divides our days into hours  
of light & dark. Red rocks beckon us up

slopes, into valleys. Leaving blue  
horizons & brushed peaks white, we enter  
an urban landscape, constructed environment.

If we live in the city center we live down  
in a valley shaded by high-rise walls,  
in a surveyed grid of concrete & steel.

As the gallery cars—tagged in Omaha—show  
off spray-can-art tattooed by ghetto modernists,  
long haul truckers face snow in the Four Corners.

In a surveyed grid of concrete & steel,  
someone was shot in an alley between Race  
& High street at 2:32 am. No suspects.

