

*Note: all images are of paintings (or details) done by the poet
(except for the still-life taken by the poet on p. 9)*

Sixfold Poetry Awards
Submission of Five Poems
July 2022

Title: the mike family album

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summer



it was yellow in a wildly lit, lemon-drop sky, where this beech glowed
its autumn, and we sat there, stoned and drunk, thinking we'd found
tao, and not understanding a girl walking by, just lost in her feet.

i had to say stop, the tree. and she did. and later she said: it had to be
god's plan that I stopped her when the glow and the sun
and we talked like old friends. what did i think?

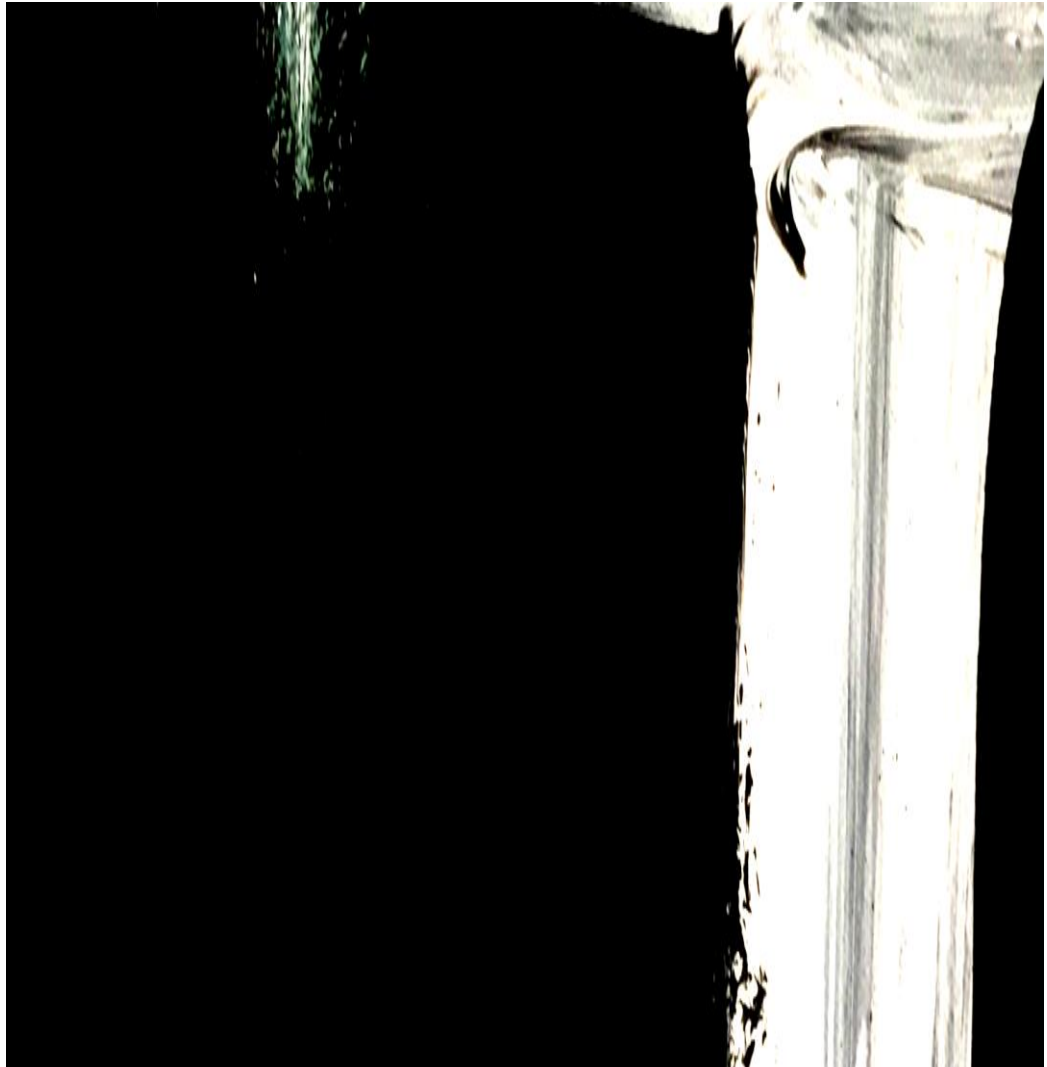
maybe not god, i said,
but bell buoy sounds are caught by the waves, and then
rung along some beach, days later, somewhere far.

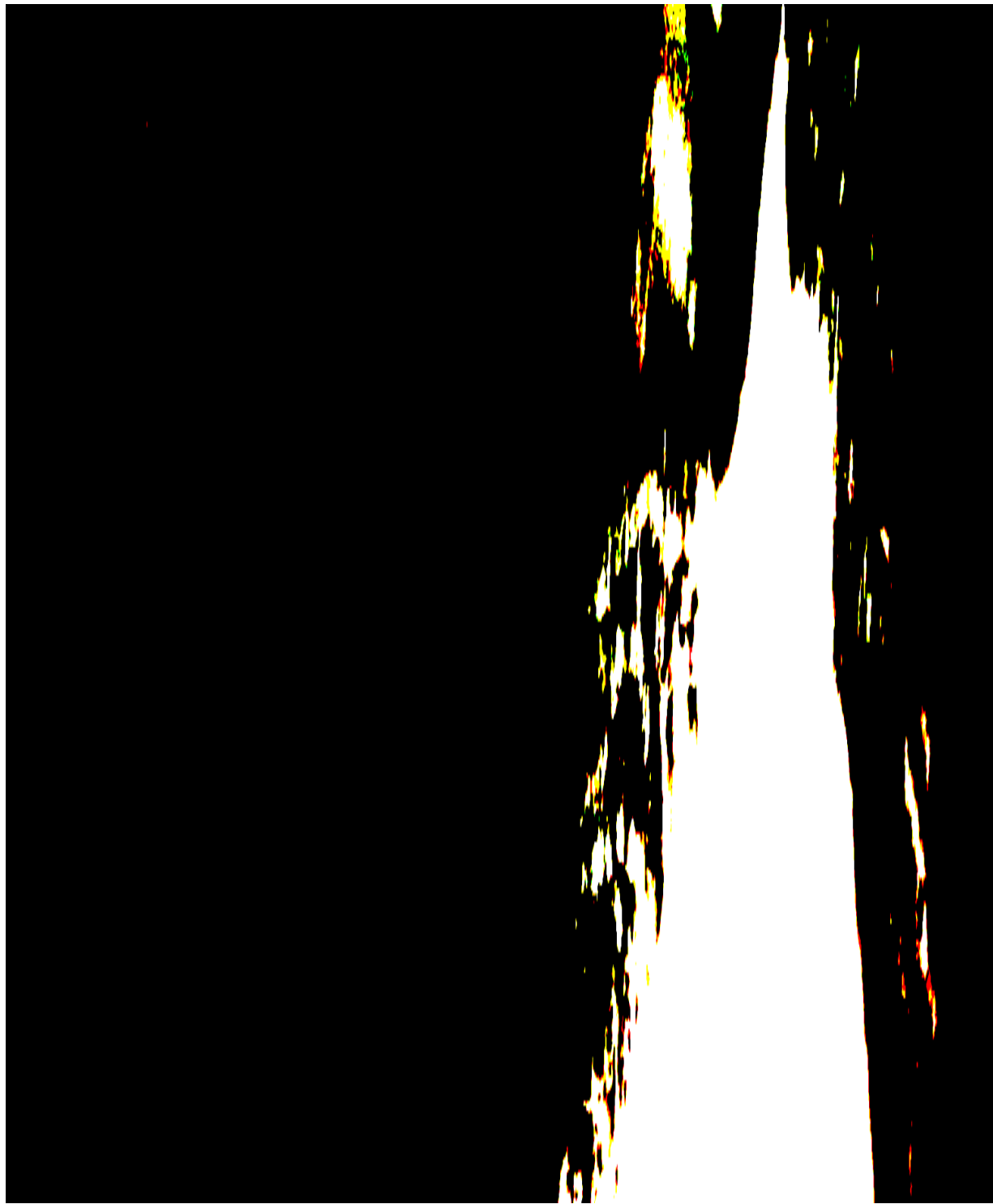
there's something in that, that's like this tree.
and water melts mountains
is the second thing.

what we were feeling, was it love? she asked.
love? i said back, with her hands in mine,
this soon? i guess.

she wanted somehow to have eternal life. i said that
supermen could buy it, being billion-billionaires,
but i just cared for little things. that's all i was.

then i remember getting old, alone.
which is not about death; you know that, mike.
i'd take it if it came tomorrow
it's about pretending to live among the living
when i'm not, and haven't been.
i mean, i hadn't even realized it was summer!
every day i stay inside and listen
to the silence.
but am i wrong?
hasn't it been turning colder?





Fall can i draw breath?

or is this how i'll
and what is th
crawling?
j e
i am
ing. as sure ly
prayer
ches
i just

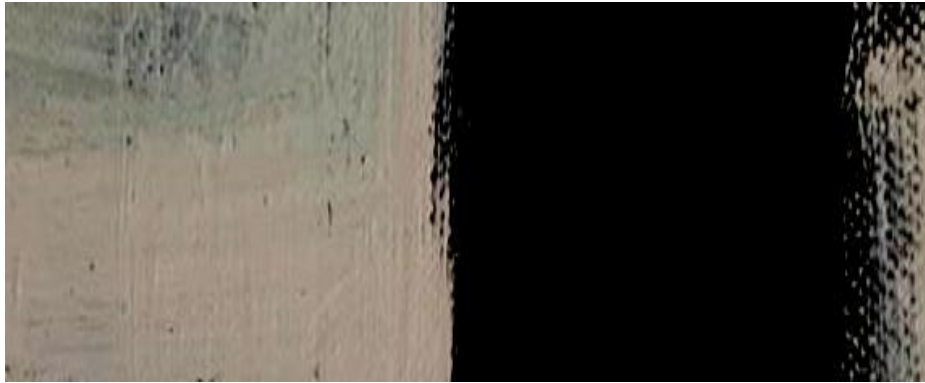
die?
at
oh
sus
fall
as
rea
god
can't

.

winter

magenta lingers

past creosote wires and the Star K Gas sign. a baby cries
and the water pails line up and the honk and rush of the highway all night
are not my business.
i have a nice little room where i'm moved by the sunsets,
and the grate on my window makes a pattern i look
out of



the skies there are purple, then dark
blue, then yellow.

the hum behind the walls never leaves my head,
and the moon sometimes speak

i have lived through moments
of pink and red,

when a baby dies,

and a woman cries out,

and a cello.

spring

I what's the point? this pale blue iris is just like that one, and that one's like this other, and if the next one's the way days used to begin, pale and barely blue, then they're all alike and they all feel the same. what's the use? what's the point?

II a man in back of the denver zoo hopped a low wire fence, perfecting his path into tiger eye jujitsu. his sensei had taught:
when your mind is the color of his five inner eyes, tell him the

*nam
eb e*

*g
ave*

*yo
u*

*at t
h e*

*beg
in n*

*in g
o f*

*ti
me.*



III i'm doing this more, losing time,
here for which day. (i think i've been
hours

feeling flowers.) it's my wife's third garden, says it's full of blue iris.
my hat is black, too, and my new

f
olding chair.



IV

most of all, i'm afraid every day.

no way i'm going out.

every rock and bush where he'd hide, i hate.

and yes, i was told,

that the cop had shot him. a bullet in the head.

the thing should be dead.



V

once

my eyes were great.

i could see insects

birds couldn't.

and my face.
my wife said
i could sell it.
eyes and nose and li ps
didn't matt
er,
i was a model for the m a ll.



this isn't madness,
is it?

aren't there
buried
burning lakes,
black doves
on iron nests,
and whirling
flocks
of blinded
meadow larks
already
not to
think about?

(aren't there
things
that
only live
between
da rk?)
i wonder:

is dawn
the
real
madness?

why start?

asking about
madness
is sure
to cause it.

(so i think
i should ask
it.)

