

creek, creak, crick, cricket

Back-porch stoops
of old bed & breakfasts
have quiet spells before the call of supper,

when the hands of the grandfather clock halt,
leaving thoughts to wander a bit,
unfettered and by themselves.

Funny how the mind
responds to the cherished rarity
of time alone,

like a caged animal
being released for the first time,
timid and unsure,

until a paw pressed into the velvety grass
lets freedom sink in, and boom,
it races out to embrace every single
atom of its new existence,

through forests, over stones,
to wonder about
the most wondrous of things,

funny little things,
like how creek, creak, crick and cricket
all sound so similar in the mouth
yet so different in the ear,

how the first – fingers plucking
a harp in an endless loop –
flows like water over the tongue,

while the second has a sharp snap to it, of
broken trees unwilling to bend any further,

how the third is heard with tremendous heaviness,
the weight of an elephant's foot upon one's neck,

which can be just as easily lifted by the fourth,
the symphony of a million tiny maestros
fiddling their legs from the darkness of the forest.

Eyes without someone's gaze are just eyes.
Stale, humid air hanging onto a long summer's eve
always has a sweetness beneath.

my uncharitable donation

A boy sits on the floor in
his underwear, somewhere,
without the blue-collared and
pink-striped shirt
that looked so sharp against
steel eyes and combed hair –
and especially good on Easter Sunday –
or the cargo shorts with pockets
that puffed like blow fishes,
stuffed with beach shells,
or the Asics sneakers that learned
to ride a two-wheeler bike,
proudly, all on their own.

A boy sits on the floor in
his underwear, somewhere,
because of my selfishness,
naked as my guilt, unaware
that the clothes on his back,
the ones my son had outgrown
but I had not, can be found
in the brown box
in my garage, still unloaded
into my car, just sitting there,
struggling to part ways
with memories I
too deeply folded into them.

unwritten letter

Emptiness spills no
light upon the page.

Ink is blood,
re-picking of a dried scab,

a spoiled seed conceived
in the weakness of a heart long ago,

grown unclipped,
gnarled and willful tendrils,

my own poisonous encasing.
Words, infected with history,

too thick to slip through
window's crack,

too blunt to snip
the mistakes of another time,

reduce to widows
atop a deepening expanse

of how-to-begin, plead
for a harbored clearing,

though perhaps today,
at the tickling of the sun's

faintest slivers,
hope shall anew.

apache tears

The tears of Apache wives
wept deep into the mountainside,

Plenty enough to fill
the white boys' tin buckets –

plunk, plunk, plunk.

Hold a stone teardrop in your palm
and you never have to weep again,

It does all the weeping for you,
legend has it.

Real bones at the base of the cliff,
warriors too proud to die indignantly,

Now forgotten relics picked over
in the afterlife,

Unnamed gravestones of shadowy translucence
caught between eye and sun,

Incur happiness in the innocence
of not knowing.

The tears' only inclusions,
mourning, imperfections

Rock tumblers and history books
can easily spin a shine on –

plunk, plunk, plunk.

rationed

I was forever
sentenced
to you, by you,
confined to
love served
through small slats,
lacking proper
nourishment,
emptying me
to death.

