

THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOU

By Michael Escoubas

you danced with lilacs scenting
the spring air. Petunias and bluebells
clapped their hands. Forsythia
and red bud tangled in a clash
of color. When you turned,
your yellow hair shifted shoulders.
I thought your eyes caught mine,
but I couldn't let you know
I saw you seeing me. I thought,
who would look at this clod in the field?
I'm uncool, except for hearing
poetry's music. This mistress
of words holds me, yet denies
completeness. But, in you I feel
poetry's promises. The brushings
of your dress give voice and image
to lines crying for habitation. You
live in these lines, after all these years,
as from the first time I saw you.

RIVER TROUT

A small fish hovers
in a cold creek,
he blends with rocks
draped in algae

pocked and pitted by
time's relentless rush.

I marvel at the genius
of this camouflaged rock
drifting transparently
in and out of memorized
crevices following his
ancient stream bed map,
protection against
eagles and bears.

I value him beyond
how he will taste
(if my heart lets me catch him).
At least his life has a plan.

Where is my map against
time's relentless rush?

WINDOW

From the back door window the sky
is dressed in hues of pink and blue.

I call my wife, just out of the shower.
She's wrapped in her mint-green robe.

*The sun is costuming clouds--you need to see this,
he's putting on a show, just over the horizon.*

My arm cradles her waist—
her wet hair rests on my shoulder.

Tearing myself away I start breakfast:
Wheat Chex in brown and beige bowls,

pink grapefruit halves sectioned
with a serrated blade. I toast bread,

top it with butter and cinnamon sugar.
Folgers coffee scents the air.

Holding hands across the dark wood table
we ask, *God be with our children, bless them.*

*All three of them
far from the arms that once held them,
far from the noise that once filled the house.
far from the sweet music that once filled our lives.
Amen.*



EYES AT SUNSET

There's
something
sleight of hand
about this place:
Sea and sand conspire
with wave and whitecap to
capture the sun, wash its face,
paint its eyes as orange embers.
Its jack-o-lantern mouth grimaces
as once again it surrenders to night.

SPRING WALK

Already, I feel refreshed,
just out of the back door striding
down the street. With soft hands,
a light breeze touches my face.
Squirrels scamper on wet roads.
Clawing quickly up trunks,
they stop, jerk their round faces
out of my sight. Water pools in low
places at the ends of driveways.
Trees angle for a better look
at themselves in liquid mirrors.
Bushes and trees shimmer like
polished gems. Who could tell
that overnight the whole creation
groaned, awash in waves of thunder
and swords of lightning cutting
clouds? What lessons must I learn
from this light breeze that fingers my face?

Bio

Michael Escoubas studied poetry and poetics for thirty years before writing for publication. In 2013, after retiring from a 48-year career in the printing industry he joined the Illinois State Poetry Society. ISPS has been instrumental to his growth as a poet.

Michael's study of great poets has included but has not been limited to Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, and Emily Dickinson. Among more contemporary poets,

Etheree Taylor Armstrong, W.S. Merwin, Mary Oliver, Billy Collins, and Wendell Berry, are among his favorites.

His poems consistently receive honors in competitions sponsored by ISPS as well as in similar competitions sponsored by the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS).

Michael is contributing poet for *Limited* Magazine, a business-lifestyle publication produced and distributed in Bloomington, Illinois. His poems have appeared in *The Avocet*; *Whispers On-line Poetry Journal*; *Quill and Parchment*; and *Your Daily Poem*, among others.

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