

## **Ace Boggess – Two Poems**

### ***Movie Magic***

Three hours from end of her shift to start of our movie:  
Thursday-night preview of *Bohemian Rhapsody*  
I knew I'd love. Anything to do with Queen  
took me to childhood & rare feelings of safety music brought.  
We had time & didn't want to sit around  
thinking how much we'd love it  
because we might not love it as much as we'd like  
in that way expectations let you down  
when your favorite football/hockey/baseball team loses in the playoffs &  
you're left with no reason to get out of bed tomorrow,  
no hope for anything good to happen. So,

we took a drive through Kanawha State Forest  
to view leaves which changed color later.  
I wanted to see them & wanted her to see them &  
wanted to share the seeing of them with her  
like a new favorite song from a new favorite band.

We listened to the radio & drove through the woods  
for an hour, pointing out favorite swaths of swirls  
as psychedelic as notes coming out of my dash.  
Left us feeling we drove into a painting by Van Gogh,  
hillsides covered with bursts of flamboyant excess  
like Freddie in one of his on-stage outfits.  
I almost expected the trees to raise a playful fist to us,  
calling us *Darling* in whispers.

### ***I Miss Writing Obituaries***

although a quarter-century has passed & I'm closer to mine  
than those I typed on an ancient newsroom keyboard.  
I miss the love (or lack of) passed along  
by family or funeral directors  
with awkward facial ticks & charcoal suits.

They'd bring me tins of cookies at Christmas:  
red Santas & wreaths glazed in emerald glitter  
no staff would eat them unless somebody else went first,  
superstition transforming treats into cursed objects  
smelling of formaldehyde. I miss the dead, too—

their fraternal organizations, masonic symbols, spouses,  
special friends. Even their names misspelled on birth certificates  
were subjects of intrigue: John with two h's,  
Amy of the two e's, Plymale or Plymail, Gold or Golds.  
Each life was a formula for mystery. What secrets vanished?

What of the survivors—a mother, two brothers,  
two sons, & a daughter? There's a universe  
of those remaining. We can't know them.  
They have their stories, but who will tell them?  
Who speaks for lists of those not-yet-but-soon?

**Ace Boggess** is author of five books of poetry, most recently *Misadventure* (Cyberwit, 2020) and *I Have Lost the Art of Dreaming It So* (Unsolicited Press, 2018), as well as two novels, including *States of Mercy* (Alien Buddha Press, 2019). His writing appears in *Notre Dame Review*, *The Laurel Review*, *River Styx*, *Rhino*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, and other journals. He received a fellowship from the West Virginia Commission on the Arts and spent five years in a West Virginia prison. He lives in Charleston, West Virginia.