

Ace Boggess – Two Poems

48th Birthday

I stand out in silver morning,
smoking cigarettes I should quit, won't, &
thinking if this serenity draped around me

sooner, I could've walked through spiderwebs &
not felt the bite of dread, said hello
to those who might have known me better,

traveled past the limits of my tether.
Beyond the fence, two does & their fawns
camp out as if awaiting the performance

by a jam band I didn't know was on the bill.
I watch them rest & lick at leaves.
Good way to pass five minutes

often fated for regrets—
not a lot, but plenty to move me
forward on a horse with broken legs.

To a Poet Friend

I left your book *The Other Language*
on a prison library shelf
with convicts,
my name too among journal pages
already obscured from jailers.

Does it unnerve or excite
to think a murderer
or minor copper-wire thief
might discover your words &
escape past razor wire?

What if you receive fan letters
your slim volumes outselling their free-
world counterparts & you
an inmate favorite?
Imagine one life transforms

by taking the journey with you
past the Guatemalan volcano
into a slick green sea of rainforest
far from troubles, wardens, &
shivs honed out of a bone.

Ace Boggess is author of six books of poetry, most recently *Escape Envy* (Brick Road Poetry Press, 2021). His poems have appeared in *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Harvard Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Rattle*, and many other journals. An ex-con, he lives in Charleston, West Virginia, where he writes and tries to stay out of trouble.