

## **Bruce Gunther – Three Poems**

### **Alive Like That**

*To walk among people  
with the open secret of being alive*

*-- Octavio Paz*

The end, always the end, hovers unseen,  
ready to lift the veil – to guide us  
along the path that's forever waiting.  
Until then, standing in a crowd waiting  
for the streetlight to change, so alive  
that I embrace the sunlight and it embraces  
me back.

So alive, as if a perfect order of things  
revealed – as if life is without thought,  
the wild mind at rest, the divide between  
past and present is seamless.

At night, casting aside the archaic  
rules separating self and the expected  
while bathing in the city's canyon of light.  
An embrace that lingers, the distilled drop  
of a sigh.

The lamp in the neighbor's window past  
midnight.

The tires of a slow-moving car hum  
in the darkness; red taillights signifying  
something.

Walking among you with my secret  
that lingers like a shadow.

Its trail, as thin as gauze, fills the empty  
spaces between this, that, and the other.

### **The Seen**

I'm almost afraid to look:  
the young couple in ecstatic love  
feeding each other in the Chinese restaurant.

An old man emptying his lungs  
into a white gym towel,  
fingertips yellowed by nicotine.

Flies swarming the vacant stare  
of the squirrel crushed in traffic.

A Confederate flag flying in front

of a house of northerners.  
Mom smacking her son in the head  
in the grocery store aisle.  
I can't look away even when  
it becomes overwhelming.  
I pull up to the drive-thru  
window where the tattooed  
arm of the cashier slithers  
toward me like a snake.

### **After The Separation (June 2009)**

I can't sleep again  
and there's no escape from this fractured place,  
no moment free of reminders.  
Panic presses against my chest,  
heavy as a lead apron.

A man coughs outside and through  
a sliver in the blind  
I see his cigarette and its orange tip  
fall into rainwater.

The new apartment smells  
of disinfectant and recent tenants.  
I shed covers aside  
and wander in darkness,  
wary of unfamiliar walls.

**Bruce Gunther** is a retired journalist and poet who lives in Michigan. He's a graduate of Central Michigan University. His poetry has appeared in *The Comstock Review*, *Modern Haiku*, *The Loch Raven Review*, *Dunes Review* and others.