

Bruce Morton – Two Poems

The Old Lady

At age ten my mother watched wide-eyed
Her oldest brother drown attempting a rescue.
Three years later no one could save her mother.
She would spend the rest of her life dreading,
Treading water in the shallows of the night

Where sleep flowed in phantom ripples.
No one knew she was a Jew. Who knew?
She told no one and found that goy—dad,
A Lutheran who had a Catholic father, no less.
Brother lost, mother lost, innocence the cost.

She clutched close the shawl of her anxieties
To her daily, always prepared for whatever
Might could maybe happen—or not. When
She died she was at a loss, neither she
Nor anyone else knew who she really was.

The Old Man

Where the hell did this come from?
After all these decades, out of nowhere.
No, make that out of some dark recess
Of subconscious, where those things
Remembered and forgotten intersect.

It is evident, now, if I think about it,
I probably knew it way back when that
Not every kid's old man chased fire engines.
He would go off like a spark at siren's wail,
Like some possessed fire-house dog in the heat

Of the moment, disappearing into the night—
Always at night, unless, of course, the weekend.
He would return home exhausted and sit, quiet,
Silent in the living room and sweat, damping
Embers still smoldering in his eyes. Spent.

Bruce Morton has published poems in a variety of magazines and anthologies over the past fifty plus years. Most recently, his work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Rye Whiskey Review*, *Adelaide*, *The Lake (UK)*, *Mason Street Review* and *Main Street Rag*.