

Bruce Morton – Three Poems

September, 1947

So, I am looking
At this photograph—
Thelonious Monk
And Howard McGhee
And Ray Eldridge and
Teddy Hill standing
In front of Minton's
Playhouse in New York
Probably before
The start of their gig.
All so very cool—
Backdrop canopy
Serves as place marker.

I cannot but note
That just sixty blocks
South down the river
From where they posed,
I was improvising,
In now-long-gone
Wickersham clinic,
Busy being born—
Yes, and all that jazz.

Plane Spotting

No, my father he
Would not watch any
Automobile race
On television
Or there at the track.
Said it was stupid
To watch cars going
In circles nowhere
One after the next,
The screamers rooting
For one car to win,
Or maybe to crash.

No, my father he
Would take me to the
Airport parking lot
To watch the airplanes
Landing and rising
One after the next,
A tension of force,
We sat mesmerized
By the gravity
Of just us, alone,
Waiting, silent, for
Someone to speak first.

Braunschweig Date

No, it was not my custom to hang out
In a cemetery, but there I was
Trying to impress future wife and her
Mother, was all part of the courting game,
Tag along, meet extended family.
It was spur-of-the-moment decision,
A quick side trip to the cemetery.

So there I am gravitating to shade
Strolling on cobblestone built to outlast
Permanent residents and visitors.
Under leaves ablaze contemplating fall,
I am alone. I have left them to their
Memory and loss. Then I feel something.
I do not know what it is—something strange.

Stillness. Quiet. Grave. Gray. She stones. Child stones.
Old stones. Row after row. Dark soil retreats
Under bright leaves that rain like embers. Then
It strikes me. On each gravestone the same date—
October 15, 1944.

Bruce Morton splits his time between Montana and Arizona. His poems have recently appeared *Main Street Rag*, *Halfway Down the Stairs*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Ibbetson Street Review*, *Grey Sparrow Journal*, and *Corvus Review*. He was formerly Dean of Libraries at Montana State University.