

Ed Meek – Five Poems



Feature Poet

Dear Mr. Frost

I've been meaning to write for advice.
I realize it's a little late. Anyway, delight,
I understand. It's how you get from there
to wisdom puzzles me. Naturally,
I want to be whole again beyond confusion,
and so, I drink. But I remain confused,
as if I'd wandered onto the road not taken
and gotten lost. Not that that makes
any difference. Now I'm on the fence
about what to do next. Return
to earth I suppose—earth's the right place for love.
Though it's a good fence, my neighbor claims.
In any case as I was saying before Truth stepped in,
Any tips, Mr. Frost? For once then, something?

Royal Rendezvous in August

Two Monarch butterflies hook up in mid-air.
Not the mile-high club, these acrobats
tryst shamelessly just off the ground—
no net needed. The orange and black-lined wings
flutter like Japanese fans
keeping them aloft in dizzying flight.

Why not alight on a butterfly bush
where they can relax?
What's the rush?
A one-minute stand
and they're off on their own.

A black and blue Swallowtail
spies jealously on.
Better find a mate soon, friend.
It's August and the long flight
from Maine to Mexico
is coded into your being
like the patterns on your wings.

The Language of the Listening Eye

Gauguin called painting
the language of the listening eye
which is why you should always keep
your eyes open. That way
you won't get paint in them.
Painting while listening to Tool,
for example, can be overwhelming.
Listen: that's not what we're after
here at the academy.
We're after much more—
eyes that hear; ears
that see a way out
of this morass, a role
for art in our age,
poetry that matters,
that makes us see
the world, listening
like Gauguin with our eyes.

Peanuts

We lined up at 7 am for the annual sale at Filene's.
The Basement was stocked with designer suits,
Wedding gowns and half-price shoes. An alarm went off
And we stampeded in a herd through the aisles.
Women stripped to try on dresses. Mothers searched
For herringbone, tweed, silk and wool.
My mother on the hunt for the best deals
Had excellent taste—everyone agreed.
This was her talent: to dress my brother, sisters,
Father and me like aristocrats for peanuts.
She taught us to read labels and discover
Imperfections: stains, missing buttons, broken zippers.
We had to look our best for Christmas,

Easter, the first day of school.
You can't correct a bad first impression,
She said, as she buttoned us up.

The Flying Dutchman

When the barometer drops you feel the pressure
on your frontal lobe. Your forehead rolls forward
and your brow pulls you down like a yoke
while you drag the plow behind--one foot
in front of the other. And if it weren't
so dry and dusty, you might be
under water, laboring like Hercules
for breath. You might be lost at sea
like the Flying Dutchman—
there was something you had to do
someone you had to find
a port in which to anchor
land to claim, seed to sow...
you forget what yet you push on
out of habit or necessity, mopping sweat,
swatting flies, grumpy and unsatisfied--
meanwhile papers pile up on your desk;
the e-mail file is full; your muted cell phone
vibrates in your pocket...

Ed Meek has had poems in *What Rough Beast*, *Constellations*, *The Sun*, *The Paris Review*. His new book of poems, *High Tide*, is available at Aubadepublishing.com. and Amazon.