

Ed Meek – Two Poems

The Great Molasses Disaster

--21 Dead, 150 injured

1919, the year of the Black Sox,
months after the Armistice was signed,
an open-hearth steel and iron tank,
50 feet tall, 90 feet wide,
brimming with 2 million gallons of molasses
shipped from Puerto Rico for industrial alcohol,
burst its rivets like the buttons on a fat man's vest
and the metal walls flew off like kites,
unleashing 26 million pounds of dark, viscous goo.

United States Industrial Alcohol
owned the holding tank. When it groaned
and peeled and leaked onto the street,
they had the leaks plugged with caulk
and painted the steel walls brown
ignoring the worker's warning
the tank was ready to blow.
A 15-foot swell flooded Commercial Street
in Boston's North End,
crushing houses, collapsing the elevated rail
and plowing cars and trucks
into the harbor while horses, dogs,
men and women were caught neck deep
in the sweet, brown muck.

Welcome to Laundry Town

If you are a little down
on your luck—divorced, thrown out,
foreclosed—you just might find yourself
lugging the wash to Laundry Town
where the change machine
charges 10% and you need to scrape
handfuls of lint off the filter
to make the dryer work.

Keep in mind detergent
costs extra and the water
in the washers never gets hot.
Don't forget to keep an eye
on your clothes after you fold them
and don't think for a minute
you can run next door to Food Town
for a salty snack while the machines spin.
You'll come back to find your favorite jeans,
the Nike sweats, and your warm wool socks
MIA, and no one there
saw a damn thing.
But wait, here they are after all
worn and rumpled, like you,
at the bottom of the pile
in the lost and found.

Ed Meek writes poetry, fiction, articles and book reviews. His new book of poems, *High tide*, is coming out soon.