

Emily-Sue Sloane – Three Poems

Earthly Concerns

I read a poem titled “Dirt Sandwich”
and spat out dust.

Those were my words, often quoted,
dismissing the vegetarian fare
at Pete Seeger’s Great Hudson River Revival
on the banks of that PCB-tainted river,
circa 1979.

Bean-filled tacos no substitute
for a juicy hamburger
with ketchup-dressed fries,
beer chaser.

That family-friendly weekend festival —
earthly concerns swaddled
in folk music and the unfurled sails
of the Clearwater sloop, messenger
of love for a river, hope for the planet.

The world tacked across the decades
sights set on solar panels, wind farms, electric cars.

Marine life now thrives in the Hudson,
though not so much in the oceans, where
plastic impersonates plankton.

I gave up red meat
for my health and for the planet.
When my bean tacos arrive
with ketchup-dressed fries and beer chaser,
I have to eat my words.

High Art

High up in branches exposed
before the greening,
sunbeams light up a nest
draped in blue bunting,
a face mask, ear loops hung

on newly woven twigs,
a 'welcome' sign intended
to catch the eye of a mate

one who will appreciate
the decorator's instinct
to snag a discarded gem,
cart it home and fashion it
into a bold and beautiful display,
one who's willing to forgive
his off-key singing
and awkward dance moves.

Why I Could Never Make It as a Diplomat

I nod so you'll think I'm listening
and I *am* listening ...

to your accent —
the melody and cadence
softening flinty American consonants
like the ocean polishes stones,

taming wandering vowel sounds
like a gardener prunes leggy rose vines
to coax them into flower and fragrance.

When you speak I follow the music,
forgetting to grasp the threads of meaning
that connect your words until I startle to attention
and have to ask: Would you please say that again?

Emily-Sue Sloane (emilysuesloane.com) published her debut collection, *We Are Beach Glass*, in late 2021. She won first place in poetry contests held by Calling All Writers, the Long Island Fair, the Nassau County Poet Laureate Society, Performance Poets Association, and Princess Ronkonkoma Productions. And she was a finalist in the Babylon Village Poetry Contest. Her poetry appears in a variety of journals and anthologies, including *Amethyst Review*; *Avocet*; *Bards Annual*; *Boston Literary Magazine*; *Calling All Writers*; *Chaos: The Poetry Vortex*; *The Closed Eye Open-Maya's Micros*; *Corona*; *Front Porch Review*; *The Long Island Quarterly*; *Mobius Magazine*; *Never Forgotten: 100 Poets Remember 9/11*; *PPA Literary Review*; *Poeming Pigeon's From Pandemic to Protest*; *RavensPerch*; *Trees in a Garden of Ashes*; *Twin Towers, Twin Decades*; *Shot Glass Journal*; and *Suffolk County Poetry Review*. She lives in Huntington Station, NY.