

## Isabelle Goodrich – Three Poems

### Winter Poem for 2022

Waking up to the first sun in a week.  
The half read books stacked on my bedside,  
dead poets and Russian writers.  
Good morning pages. Good morning fogged glass.  
The dog shredding something dangerous downstairs.  
The perpetual winter sunset begins shortly after noon,  
brilliant as an unfriendly smile.  
Teeth in the wind, the four o'clock foreverness.  
The coyotes racing in the streets at night, freezing night.  
The full moons lessening in their kindness.  
The dog, the dumb dog, darting in front of cars.  
The house of noises he inspires. Animal manipulation.  
Winter, unkind time: aggressively dieting itself,  
stretching the last of its skin over next week,  
one month, two, the scale of the weather app waiting.  
This winter, a rejected magazine cover,  
showing up dead on our front stoop.  
Headlamps in the dark. Streetlights and fog.  
No snow. No soundproof whiteness,  
just salt studded asphalt and the skinny fingers of the trees  
reaching for the feast of the sun.  
Nothing to welcome us inside.  
No one is waiting with a vase of warm flowers,  
a drink of water, to tell us it's all over.  
Our knuckles in the mouth of the new year,  
red gums raw and exposed,  
our memories dissolving like candy on its blue tongue.  
This winter: buckle down. Swallow vitamin D. Cancel all events.  
Nothing to distract you from the monument of loneliness,  
and yes, death: see how winter makes a pandemic poem.  
See how winter won't say its own name.  
The dog colonizing the couch, shedding without apology.  
Clinging to the bones of the day,  
eating dinner over the howls of windy night.  
Furry warlord who doesn't mind the snow, the salt, or the wet.  
No lips to chap. No fingers to shake numbness from.  
The dog just climbs over our limbs, tired of comfort,  
and presses his nose to the fogged glass.  
Come in, he says, new friends of the world. Come in.

## **Landscape in Which**

Landscape in which the wheat breaks out from the farmhouse floorboards  
and swallows the farmer whole into the field.

Landscape of endless grain.

Landscape in which daughter grabs Daddy's scythe from the hook by the door  
and starts hacking at the wheat,  
ropey and tall like a ship's rigging,  
like nothing edible,

the roots of the farm next door that encroach like fibrous snakes.

Landscape in which snakes eat the working man.

Landscape in which America furrows itself into a bitter harvest.

Landscape where the landscape destroys itself of detail like plastic surgery  
the rising hills of produce that all taste the same price.

And feed the same. And poison the same.

Landscape of cows watching the horizon  
where it's implied they might never have to meet another person,  
but in fact,

are killed out of frame in a small gray building.

Landscape in which their blood shows up down the road  
where the paperwork sits on the kitchen table.

and then a man with a tie smiles, says,  
aren't you glad to be part of something big?

The quiet house at dawn, the sacrifice of memory to what no longer is theirs.

Landscape owned by one.

Landscape owned by a museum of the family farm.

Landscape looking out of the frame at you.

Just because this painting is faceless doesn't mean it can't accuse.

Landscape in which you feel guilt.

Landscape in which you touch the paint made of oil  
which is made of corn.

Landscape that tastes good and whole in your mouth.

Landscape of Hearty Meal. Good Soup.

Landscape in which you are sold something.

Landscape in which the ground you used to touch  
advertises your tongue and stomach to your own body,  
like a cow who just wanted to be lonely.

Landscape in which there is no more need for landscape.

Landscape in which you turn away from this poem,  
with your mouth all dry and husky.

Landscape of your small life.

Landscape in which you could make honesty your house  
if it wasn't owned by a different government.

## **Eclipse in November**

And now, for the first time in five hundred and eighty years,  
The moon is lingering in the sky while we spin in front of her  
inflicting a purple bite over her body.  
This is the longest lunar eclipse for a few centuries.  
The deliberate drag through the night,  
showing us how light passes through time.

We stay up all night  
To remember everyone who loved this piece of sky before us.  
Kate and I pull on an extra layer.  
She twists her gold chain over her coat,  
so it can see the moon.

I wear the green trench coat over my bathrobe and slippers,  
padded and indelicate,  
the way I dressed all pandemic long.  
I say, I can't believe you people are missing out! Wake up!  
Kate says, your hair looks great like this.  
I think we are very beautiful.

Through glass, the moon takes on varied hues.  
Reds. Oranges. Greys.  
Down the hill, on the dark water,  
one goose cries out to let us know he's awake with us.

We've been sick for weeks, something in our chest tangled up in itself.  
We hack up phlegm and spit on the grass.  
Sorry, moon, we say. Help us out?

Space is so terrifying! Who could live in the sealed plastic of darkness?  
The moon is brave. Sorry, sorry for getting in your way.  
Sorry for blocking out the sun.

I should show up to class like this:  
unslept, drenched in the absence of light,  
my untouched pockets filled with pieces of home.  
I am the new clothes of autumn.  
I could walk through life being as honest as I am in the cool grass.  
I could peel off fear with one swipe of the moon's eyes.

There's still a tiny sliver of white left at the bottom curve.  
There's always a piece of light that doesn't go out, no matter how hard you look at it.

**Isabelle Goodrich** is a writer from Boston and a student at Bryn Mawr College. She was a finalist for the position of Boston Youth Poet Laureate in 2019. Her work has been displayed on the walls of City Hall as a part of the Mayor's Poetry Program, and subway stations all around Boston as a winner of the Boston in 100 Words Youth Prize.