

Jennifer Barber – Five Poems



Feature Poet

Aubade

Because the mourning doves believe
 aubades are always about them
 opening their beaks to blend
 sorrow with a hazy joy

as when the dawning
 of today grows audible,
 the rain tapering off
 through the dripping trees,

you and I are listening in bed,
 neither fated yet
 to have lost the other.
 Aubade, aubada, a song

of greeting or parting at daybreak.
 The propagation of light
 across the floor,
 our eyes blossoming.

A Walk After The News

Since the dogwood's flowers
are parchment tinted pale green

or translucent pink like watermelon juice
staining the clear sky,

each a cup raised to the light,
will they blot out every thought?
Can I forget what I've heard?
Will the shock of the petals

flashing like daytime stars
erase my darkness of mind?

The Rules Today

No trees. Nothing about death.
Nothing about the tree of death.
Or something about trees, but not death,
one with spade-shaped leaves,
one with leaves like fingers spread.
With the *Guide* I bought, I thought I'd know
a gray from a paper birch,
yellow oak from mossy cup,
comparing the acorns in my hands.
Instead I'm losing my way
among the boulders and roots,
familiar only with the veins
engraved in a leaf of witch hazel.

To A Seedpod: Questionnaire

Do you prefer a hard bed or a soft?
I sleep night and day in the grass.

What is your best feature?
I'm covered with pale fur,
soft as a cat's ear.

What motto can you share with us?
Return, return,
return to the ground of your soul.

Which tree let go of you?
The southern magnolia.

Why do you call her southern?
Her leaves stay all year.

Where can I find others of you?
In the graveyard of the slaves.
On the college lawn.

The Dream Of Smoking In Bed

Taking a deep drag. Taking another one.
Abandoning *Spinoza* for *The Long Goodbye*.
Dozing, burning to hear
the nearness of your step.
Scorching a hole in the sheet,
the damage done, the flames.
Later, before dawn, we pass
a cigarette back and forth,
licking the ash and salt on our lips.

Jennifer Barber's collections are *Works On Paper* (2016, The Word Works) *Given Away* (2012, Kore Press), and *Rigging The Wind* (2003, Kore Press). She is the founding editor of *Salamander* and a 2017 recipient of a MacDowell Colony Fellowship.