

John Grey

Watching Her

The war between the sexes is over.
She grieved then ate and grew.
She calls herself the gray whale.
But her smiles are many and unnumbered.

She's up with the light at daybreak.
For she has a farm to run.
Has never been knowingly cruel.
And has abandoned most memories.

Her man does come back in dreams sometimes.
So she chases him with a dream broom.
Time to start the tractor.
Time to be her father's only child.

There are still moments at night
when the bed feels so big for one.
But she has fields big enough for a hundred.
And the pain of work eschews all other pains.

There are no great lies in her life.
Her fingernail dirt does not allow for pretense.
And the past is not a job she was ever good at.
The present is where she earns a living.

The year's a third over. The land is seeded.
With a glass of cheap wine, she sits on her porch
at sunset, wills the future into being.
She imagines herself up to her neck in harvest.

To keep life going, everybody's put somewhere.
She's on a Midwest patch of ground and nowhere else.
When her father died, voices came calling.
People said, "sell up," "quit", "you're a woman."

But she's wielded the axe, she's stared down the bankers.
Her sweat, her leather cheeks, are post-man.
No one's seen a woman keep up a farm like she has.
Everything she does feels like it needs a new name.

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident, recently published in *Sheepshead Review*, *Poetry Salzburg Review* and *Hollins Critic*. Latest books, *Leaves On Pages*, *Memory Outside The Head* and *Guest Of Myself* are available through Amazon. Work upcoming in *Ellipsis*, *Blueline* and *International Poetry Review*.