

Mark Danowsky – Two Poems

Displacement

Two weeks before we receive the eviction notice
I walk our dog early for a Sunday

Since the weather has just taken a turn
I'm underdressed and instantly eager
to retreat indoors where coffee awaits

Curbside in front of our place
I hear a sound that is distinctly watery

The dog appears to busy himself
using his most finely-tuned sense
to determine an Eastern bluebird's time of death
while I scan the hilly terrain in search of sound

Almost to my surprise, I discover the source—starlings
taking turns bathing in a second-story gutter
not thirty feet away

I motion for the dog to witness
but he declines in favor of further bluebird analysis

Alone I watch each starling splash
produce a sprinkler effect—displacing
water in a way that seems particular
and I suspect has to do with weight and wingspan

Burn Barrel

Two days after my grandmother's funeral
I carry the dog outside for his morning ritual

Beyond the fenceline, I see the widow
has a new burn barrel—
remnants of the old one still curbside

I returned from the funeral sick
and my neighbor who recently lost her mother
told me she's sick, too

We're standing on our respective porches
when my neighbor tells me the outside air is bad

I return inside thinking this is just an old wives' tale—
passed down mining town lore
presented like an ancient morality myth

I'm convinced the widow has it in for me
because I let my dog do business on her property

It's 10am and the burn barrel is going hard—
smoke rising to the bare oak branches

I watch an old man walk over to the barrel
with an armful of plastics

Mark Danowsky is Editor-in-Chief of *ONE ART: a journal of poetry* and Senior Editor for *Schuylkill Valley Journal*. He is author of the poetry collection *As Falls Trees* (NightBallet Press). His work has appeared in *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Cleaver Magazine*, *Gargoyle*, *The Healing Muse* and elsewhere.