

## **Michael Todd Steffen** – Two Poems

### **Strong Wind**

The joints in the walls  
creak and snap  
this mad March morning  
I have kept the curtain closed  
for the odd bright steady glare  
in the window  
making little sense  
to the slamming  
over and over  
of a loose porch door  
and the strain on a small  
inner flame  
in its stranding nest.

No this without a that.  
With a sandwich paper  
a dropped stuffed bear  
tumbles down the sidewalk  
where I've looked down.

The calm lake once invited me  
to thumb the reel loose and cast.  
It runs now to a dark static of ripples.  
The gesture of an open mouth  
gulps back to hollow swallows  
uphill against the wild gust  
of winter grappling to hold on  
to the child it threatens to  
usher away,  
clutching the bill of my cap.

### **Pre-millennial to Phone**

You were a bird,  
you were a vine.  
String with two cups to the complicated  
wired line that ran

into the box with innards  
of induction coils,  
an impedance transformer or something  
that digested the dial

to *drring drring drring*...  
Most always, at least as I was  
growing up, you were purposed  
with another's voice *on the other end*.

Now you are some netted  
sea creature, were I to slice open  
I could no more explain,  
fuller of the facts

than Grace Hopper, even if  
you insist on spelling triolet triplet.

Once upon a time you could  
disappear for the ache  
in my ear, dripping up  
a bill.

Now in its clarity  
the season reverses, turns brisk  
with autumn evenings resisting less  
for the long hours of putting summer away,  
drawing the curtains against the early darkness.

The recipient of a 2021 Massachusetts Cultural Council grant, **Michael Todd Steffen's** poetry has appeared in journals, including *The Boston Globe*, *The Concord Saunterer*, *The Dark Horse*, *Ibbetson Street*, *Poem* and *The Lyric*. *On Earth As It Is*, his second book, is forthcoming from Cervena Barva Press.