

Sarah Carleton – Two Poems

Homebody

Morning starts at night with dark roast, and I
in wool socks and man-sized orange fleece sweater

imagine I'm camping, that feeling of being in a chilly
elsewhere, maybe the woods or a field of fiddles

and banjos either squeaking out their last nocturnal tune
or rising with the first pluck of the day.

While I shuffle into yoga pants and drive my kid to work,
I ponder podcasts and how the car never warms up.

Home again, huddled on the couch as the sky lightens, I cradle
a bowl of cooked apples with cinnamon and muesli and then

for two shakes' worth of exercise haul boxes of dead twigs
to the curb before hurrying back to my hot laptop and cozy corner,

idly calculating one thousand and four yard-garbage days
since we moved here. I've grown a new silver strand for each one.

By the time daylight throws a sun spear over the screened enclosure
and a green hummingbird is stitching the hibiscus and a cardinal

is posing on a broken slat in the back fence, I'm well awake,
braless, wrinkled, face unscrubbed, hair a nest, collecting

threads to feather my minutes—musings and side trips
and any old wool that happens to gather.

Travel Breakfast

You might be reading a phrase book
at a table as you break open a croissant
and reach for a ceramic pot of coffee

or maybe you're in the passenger seat,
fumbling a box of cereal from Quik Mart.
Fumes might hang in hot air as you walk

across a parking lot and into a restaurant
where a hostess says, "Three?"
and silverware clinks and synthetic syrup

soaks through pancake stacks
or maybe you're sitting in your mom's kitchen,
cozy as a nested bird,

and she's been up since sunrise
and has kept sourdough toast warm for you.
Two summers ago, when you palmed

a packet of oatmeal in a hotel lounge
and poured boiling water into a styrofoam cup
as TV news yammered in the corner, you had no idea

such a mundane trip would linger in the archives.
Now entrenched at home,
you think about the vanilla that steamed

into your nostrils when you pried a waffle
from the iron, and that small scent
opens up a continent.

Sarah Carleton writes poetry, edits fiction, plays the banjo, and makes her husband laugh in Tampa, Florida. Her poems have appeared in numerous publications, including *Nimrod*, *Chattahoochee Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Pirene's Fountain* and *New Ohio Review*. Her first collection, *Notes from the Girl Cave*, was recently published by Kelsay Books.