

Sharon Waller Knutson – Three Poems

Teton Valley Flood June 5, 1976

1- Steamroller

He is about to put a new starter
in the black 1969 Oldsmobile
when the sheriff shouts,
*The Teton Dam busted
and the river is running
your way. It's time to evacuate
your mobile home park.*

We flee to the hill
near Ricks College
where we watch
the wall of water
turn into a steamroller,
stripping the land from Sugar
City to Rexburg, tossing
like toys, the Texaco Station,
Trailer Park, Clyde's
Café, houses and vehicles
and drowning livestock.

We find our doublewide
five blocks away, logs
from the lumberyard
sticking out of windows,
and the Oldsmobile
molded by the river's
hands into one gigantic
round metal sculpture.

2- Missing Mare

Our four stallions –an Arabian,
Palomino and two Appaloosas -
stomp and stamp hooves
in their temporary stables
at the rodeo grounds,

missing our mare,
the sorrel quarter horse
with the white socks
and feet hobbled like a geisha
to keep her from running away.

*Last we saw her, she was paddling
in the pasture trying to keep her
head above water, says a neighbor.
I don't see how she could survive.
The land is underwater now.*

We drive up the road
expecting to find her carcass
when we look up and spot
the mare mud up to her chin
running towards us fast
and free without any shackles.

3-Surviving with Squatters

We buy a house and a barn
with the insurance money
and find a dark haired
man and red headed woman
about our age and a boy
and a girl about the same age
as ours sitting at the kitchen
table eating soup and bread.

*The pastor said the house
was vacant and we lost
our house in the flood,
the man says. Maybe
it's because our baby
bumps are the same size
or we feel like family
that we let them stay.*

We four sleep in one bedroom
and they four sleep in the other
until they get enough money
to buy a plot of land from us
and move in a double wide
and two families
displaced by the flood
sprout new water wings
and learn to swim again.

Sharon Waller Knutson is a retired journalist who writes poetry from her Arizona desert home. Her work has appeared most recently in *One Art*, *Verse-Virtual*, *Trouvaille Review*, *Spillway*, *Gleam*, *Your Daily Poem*, *Red Eft Review*, *Writing in a Woman's Voice*, *Five-Two* and *The Song Is...*. Her first full book collection, *What the Clairvoyant Doesn't Say*, and her seventh chapbook, *Trials & Tribulations of Sports Bob* are forthcoming from Kelsay Books..