

Timothy Gager – Five Poems



Feature Poet

When You Have This Connection

It's like the kitchen is on fire,
when before you only smelled smoke

you buy, what you buy, food,
when you buy, it's what she wants.

You will scrub the house clean
if she were to drop in. No need to call

when you didn't see her on *Wednesday*
as you've seen her the last three of those

like a pattern—a routine you had.
---like laundry on the same night, forever,

always on Wednesday,
the middle of the week.

But the day you sat her down, and confided
you had anxiety, about all these changes, you said instead,

the days are getting shorter, it's getting darker,
you never liked losing those minutes of daylight.

Spring always arrives, she answered
yet, I still mourn, like Whitman

his lilac blooming perennial,
and his drooping star in the west

I love that she knows that verse
and I love that she is right.

How Lucia Joyce was Treated

There are no structured steps
when a coryphée is dismissed
the staged mind is darkened

Reject the limitations
movements derived
from interpretation of feelings

Rhythms become more fitful
food thrown up. She heaved
a chair at Nora on father's fiftieth.

Fires were set after Ulysses
Cut phone chords
disconnecting congratulations

Jung felt she, severed from reality
while James had anosognosia,
rubbed in the assessor's nose

CG said they dove in the ocean
To gather improbable creatures
Except James twirled to the surface

Lucia spun all the way down
hands up in surrender
to unwilling incarceration.

James swam functionally as a genius
and cement shoed dance partner,
all his weight tied to Lucia.

Midwinter Aficionado

raced to daybreak
my dear, crossing
beau jesting, surely

our dice came up
how I roll.
snake . . . eyes

So cold today.

It is ALL faunas here;
a chicken fowls out
the bile of connubial,

the times you peaked,
the times you saw trees
swaying, the woodpeckers sounded
.....

never fall,
at the point of staccato.

Thinking in Long Distance Relations

Loneliness was the handcuff.
I wanted bright fireflies instead-

on-off-on-off-I-couldn't-get-off
the sofa, stuck like glue.

I'd picked up an accordion to make loud bellowing,
gave up and left it a large slinky toy in the corner.

My dog strays there while I'm not looking,
his tail never wagged quite right, failing

like a helicopter with a crooked rotor mast,
pull me up please, so, I paused, paws, (pause),

I'd lost my mind half-way through this ride
halfway through my existence, focusing,

I am trying to picture,
how my other half lives.

Canticle

Sung to the mountains,
loudly from their lungs,

like dark clouds
moving across the sky

edged in purple, lit and shaken
a sublimely drenched image.

Dawn-noon-dusk rolled together;
that's how it had revolved lately

Why hadn't I looked?
I never really saw,

Only anticipated rain
to wash my sinful grime.

Oh Lord, that harmonic was perfection.
It converted me from nothing.

Timothy Gager is the author of fifteen books of fiction and poetry. His latest, *Spreading Like Wild Flowers*, is his eighth of poetry. Timothy hosted the successful Dire Literary Series in Cambridge, MA from 2001 to 2018 and was the co-founder of The Somerville News Writers Festival. He has had over 600 works of fiction and poetry published, of which sixteen have been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. His work has been read on National Public Radio. His work also has been nominated for a Massachusetts Book Award, The Best of the Web, The Best Small Fictions Anthology and has been read on National Public Radio.