

William Doreski – Three Poems

A Dream of Place

The parabola of the fly pond's
shoreline complicates the view
of pines reflected in autumn-
colored water. The path
of my gaze under the influence
of gravity follows this curve
and ends in a dark moment
occluding the November sun.

I've stood here long enough
for stars to explode at the far
reaches of galaxies beyond
the acumen of simple optics.
I've felt the weight of planets
upholstered with toxic gases
and heard a vee of geese wheel
through the invisible zodiac
with their wingbeat telegraphing.

The fly pond itself weighs nothing.
It's only a hint of silver
laid over a deep cold shadow,
an imaginary depth unable
to confirm the laws of physics.
Trout caught here have adapted
to live in a false dimension
and feed on sparks and whispers.

I dip a hand in the illusion
and a shock thrills me all over.
Time to go home and drown
my loose ends in a tumbler
of bourbon that like the pond
snags color from the atmosphere
and renders it simple enough
for human perception to process.

Seven-Sided Curse

You read in a book that seven
sided objects, landscapes, people
offend nature, flesh, and spirit.

Your new distrust of heptagons
infects your daily perceptions.
With a tidbit of clever math

you prove that my rectangular
desk has three invisible sides
and has secretly undermined me

for at least the last twenty years.
You also demonstrate that walking
to the brook to watch it trill

over rocks and form black pools
shapes a seven-sided argument
against faith in human progress.

I should stay home and read books
on the simple calculus of form.
High-school plane geometry

wasn't enough to prepare me
for the asymmetries of the world.
Heptagons are both regular

and not. I used to admire them,
but you claim they brainwashed me
in puberty when a young woman

offered seven sides of herself
without revealing anything
but moonlight the color of bone.

You know me better than history;
so when you warn me against
further consorting with heptagons

I promise that while admiring
winter constellations I'll count
only even numbers of stars.

Moments of Fluff and Bother

The cloud of sleep feels solid
as wax for a while, then thins
abruptly, dumping me to the floor.
The clammy fingers of dawn
have shucked Homeric trimmings
and clutched a winter too gruff
to defy with simple rhetoric.

All the famous suicides, Plath,
Chatterton, Crane and Berryman,
chose the coldest seasons or the sea.
These moments of fluff and bother
pass, but some people cling to them,
chaining themselves to a depth.
Better to pour a stiff breakfast
and sign a treaty with angels.

Better to pack a smiling lunch
and hike through the ruffled forest
to a sun-warm ledge and deploy
one's appetite for the betterment
of self and all humanity.
Wear orange, though. Hunting season
triggers coonskin legends men
in drunken moments endorse
with gusts of feckless hormones.

After hiking until safely tired,
drive downtown for takeout latte.
Drink it seated on the stone wall
opposite the bookstore. Then
go home and read any book
by a living author. Resume
your classical pose on the cloud.
This will polish off your day,
except for the criminal laughter
we've sworn not to laugh aloud.

William Doreski lives in Peterborough, New Hampshire. He has taught at several colleges and universities and retired after three decades at Keene State College. His most recent book of poetry is *Stirring the Soup* (2020). He has published three critical studies, including *Robert Lowell's Shifting Colors*. His essays, poetry, fiction, and reviews have appeared in many journals.