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Select Poems

Bruce Meyer

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Bruce Meyer has published books of poetry, short fiction, flash fiction, non-fiction, and literary journalism. He lives in Barrie, Ontario.

Garage

He kept supplies of pieces of the past
neatly stocked on wooden shelves.
He'd pull his car hood close to nuzzle
elements his engine cast aside.

Tidiness was never about the lack
of clutter; even I hoard scraps
of paper, imagining a word or phrase
will come in handy someday soon.

Fathers save. They collect the past
because the future remains to be written;
and having grown up in a home
where money ran out the door

to feed the hungry wolf, he knew,
uncannily he knew, what each piece
was for, as if the future was an open mouth,
oh not another mouth, needing to be fed.

Prothalamium

When she was very new, her bald head
caught the light with the delicate gold
of a quince. The perfume of morning
swaddled her in its solemn gift of love.
Those who looked on her said her gift
was simply the grace of life, as if life

was something an artist bestowed, a life
made better by a vision of joys ahead
of its own laughter. In time, her gift
was laughter that grew into soft gold
curls and everyone said she *was* love.
Her small, perfect hands each morning

reached for pieces of bread. Morning
fed her because time feeds each life
until it is full and can eat no more. Love
was always her second shadow, her head
rising nearer to the sun each day, its gold
beckoning her like a promise, its gift

always slightly beyond reach. A gift
I passed to her was desire. Morning
brings more to desire each day, the gold
that turns treasures into kings, the life
that wants more life, until time, ahead
of its own hands, runs faster than love

and she is grown. Every morning I love
how she greets me. I have danced as a gift
to other brides with her, knowing ahead
I will dance to celebrate her; the morning
of dread when she is gone, when my life
will pause to say goodbye to her, a gold

band on her ring finger, a moment of gold
that wraps itself around her pulse. Love
is celebrated when love is sealed, and life
passes like a secret or a whispered gift,
and time belongs to some other morning,
and all its futures, like proverbs in her head

when a child with gold as a gift upon its
crown will cry for love in the morning light,
and life will anoint another delicate head.

Twitch Grass

It stood up like gophers at sunset
piqued as if it noticed his fury,
editing his lawn as if a writer urgent
to take up his pen to tell a tragedy.

The day before, he'd spent hours
mowing straight lines as if a monk
with a staved vellum in scriptorium,
his art, green and thick with words.

Twitch grass reminds me of wild wheat
growing on shoulders of concessions,
exclamations of a secret past declaring
something once ran wild and fecund here.

It does twitch, rattle, and blink,
each stalk startled as if a shock
passed through it a split second,
taken by a leap of surprise:

a man in his Sunday best, kneeling,
uttering curses no Sunday should hear,
his hand wiggling the small roots
from his almost perfect lawn.

Neighbors called it crab grass,
but inland where water is only rain,
I could barely imagine green waves
rolling over hills to drown the world.

The Thaw

—for Jared Carter

There is a moment in every rural spring
when snow vanishes from last year's furrows
and small nothings come again from nothing.

The shout of an open barn door to bring
in air and chase the months of sorrows
sounds from that moment in every rural spring

when washing appears to kite on a string,
and each day leads to longer tomorrows,
and small nothings come again from nothing.

Flatland and hill farms repeat, and repeating,
are a prayer of dust only a concession knows
in that moment in every rural spring

when pane ice is off the brook, and a sleeping
century of sluices runs in fast, brown flows
so that something comes again from nothing,

leaving time, and change, and every green thing
to keep count. Poetry is life, life to interpose
life and death living in every rural spring,
so everything may come again from nothing.