Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Andrew McFadyen-Ketchum: Three Poems

Andrew McFadyen-Ketchum · Wednesday, December 16th, 2020

The Lie

My father has been silent for minutes
At his spot at the dining room table,
My sister logicking her way
Through another lie, my mother
Washing the dishes, when something
My sister says shifts the animal
Behind his eyes, and he brings
His fist down so hard on the table,
It sends the silver mixing bowl
Of raspberry preserves flying into the air,
The room's yellow walls "dripping,"
With what looks, my sister says
Years later, "like blood."

*

My Father's Sneeze

So loud
And violent
And emulative
Of his rage,
One once
Startled me
So much
I snapped
The Number 2
Pencil
In my hand
In half,
Its sharp point
Of graphite
Piercing
The flesh

Of my palm—
A mark
Left inside
No scarring
Could cure.

*

Lure

She flicks her foot
In a ray of light
The way my father
Taught me to draw
A trout with a flick
Of my lure
From the shadows
And shallows.
She draws me
To her surface.
She pulls me
From the waters
Where I cannot
Breathe. She kisses
Me tenderly
As I thumb open
My knife and place
It in her son’s hand,
Its steel flashing
In the light the way
Steel flashes
In the light. “This
Is how you clean
A fish,” I tell him
As he adds his tears
To the river, this
First catch his
First kill. “This
Is my heart,” I say
To his mother.
“Take it. Do with it
What you will.
You are the last woman
I will love.”

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