

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Ann Curran: Three Poems

Ann Curran · Thursday, April 16th, 2015

Ann Curran is author of *Me First* (Lummox Press) and the chapbook *Placement Test* (Main Street Rag). Her poetry has appeared in *Rosebud Magazine*, *U.S. 1 Worksheets*, *The Main Street Rag*, *Off the Coast*, *Blueline*, *Third Wednesday*, *Notre Dame Magazine*, *Ireland of the Welcomes*, *Commonweal Magazine* and others, as well as the anthologies: *Along These Rivers: Poetry and Photography from Pittsburgh* (Quadrant Publishing), *Motif 2 Come What May* and *Motif 3 All the Livelong Day* (MotesBooks), *Thatchwork* (Delaware Valley Poets, Inc.), *Surrounded: Living With Islands* and *Through a Distant lens: Travel Poems* (Write Wing Publishing). She holds degrees from Duquesne University. She taught at Duquesne and the Community College of Allegheny County. She was a staff writer for the *Pittsburgh Catholic* and *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, longtime editor of the award-winning *Carnegie Mellon Magazine*, and a perennial freelance writer. Many of the poems in *Me First* are based on interviews for the *Pittsburgh Press* with poets reading at the International Poetry Forum as well as interviews/encounters with other well-known celebrities, including Bill Cosby, Mister Rogers, Nancy Marchand, Maxine Kumin, Andy Warhol, Holly Hunter and Barack Obama. She is a member of the Squirrel Hill Poetry Workshop and lives in Pittsburgh, PA, with her husband, Ed Wintermantel. They have a daughter, Cristin.

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## Color Lines in Shadyside

“Get that black boy off the front porch,”  
Gram said when I brought a Thai friend  
home from tennis for some iced tea.  
I told her Thais are not Negroes  
but black skin meant black, she believed.

“Put more black faces on TV,”  
our interracial gang had urged.  
“Apologize,” the bishop said.  
I gave up Catholic race work then.

When my dark Arab date arrived,  
my brother teased, “A camel  
just pulled up out front.” We all laughed.  
That was before 9/11.  
No one feared Arabs or Muslims.

“We’re adopting a baby girl,”  
I told my mother nervously.  
Her only question: “What color?”

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## Occupational Hazards

When your family includes a Navy SEAL  
phone calls at strange hours terrify you.

Never knowing where he is, what insane  
undertaking he’s involved with, you see

him scramble through the dark of some country  
you never heard of to save some people

clearly and forever our enemies.  
Or he swims with buddies at night beside

a cliff they’ll climb to kill someone pleasant  
who wants nuclear weapons just like ours.

And that kid, still a kid, walking around  
with blood on his hands, in his heart and head.

So you think about that Christmas when he  
guarded the Obamas in Hawaii.

And you feel proud.

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## Oh, Dear: Deer

Deer used to live on the edge of Edgewood.  
Then the Parkway East cut through their homeland.

Their cousins roam the high hills of Green Tree.  
One night as I enter the parkway there

a lone doe stands staring at my headlights.  
I stop dead and wait for her to move first.

I should have recalled: There’s never just one.  
The second leaps out of the darkness, strikes

my bright red Toyota hood with one hoof,  
sails off into the night, perhaps unhurt,

but it costs me the shakes and a big bill.

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I still see that single foot land and leave.

\*

One morning on Mount Washington, my door  
opens to five deer in the small front yard—

two, snoozing comfortably in the snow,  
three stand and look at me quite unalarmed.

“How was breakfast?” I ask, seeing chomped greens.  
They don’t get the question. They don’t run off.

\*

Along the trails Mount Washington cut, chopped  
through the woods that wrap around it, we see

a commanding deer watch us from a rise.  
He looks in charge, curious about us.

What are we doing walking in his world?

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