
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Barbara Ungar: Three Poems

Barbara Ungar · Wednesday, March 25th, 2026

Bow to Infinite Moths

The hot water pipe somehow unfroze.
All the snow rose back into cloud. This year
whimpers to a close.
A memory you'd sent long ago appears—
a flock of luna moths flying into the dark.
The Polyphemus moth you found in the woods
and brought me in a plastic take-out ark
still sits on the piano—I really should
have it mounted. All I want
is to see and hear you again, the way
Heathcliff cares only to be haunted
by Catherine. Mad, but I pray
you will manifest and tell me how you are.
I write into the dark and hope you hear.

*

Trigger Warning

I wake up screaming. Just a glimpse of his
Jabba-the-Hutt bod between the sheets
was enough for me to snap
shut the newspaper and my legs.
Lying back in a combo of boredom
and loathing, was I Melania?
No, I was reading. The paper.
I endured it like the end of marriage—
for the kids, thinking of England. No,
of America. It occurs to me that I was
America, letting myself be eaten
by a slobbering hog, letting my
emotional life be run by Fox news.

It occurs to me that we are all
 in the Epstein files. That I, too,
 am America, an abused wife. It occurs
 to me that I should stop reading
 spy fiction before bed, specifically *Life*
After Life, in which our heroine shoots
 Hitler, having to endure many lives
Groundhog-Day-style before she gets it
 right. *Amor fati*. Why didn't I kill him?
 (I had the chance.) (But no gun.)
 All the women I know fantasize about it.
 There was another woman there, hovering,
 anxious or jealous, Ghislaine? There was
 a plane, some secret mission . . . Please
 let this not be a recurring dream.
 But it is. We wake to the same
 nightmare every day. Enough. America
 let's put our shoulders to the wheel.
All hands and the cook on deck!

*

Portrait of the Wind

Who has seen the wind

that great djinn
 whirl around the world

and throughout interstellar space

we see light shift around the room
 as the branches of the pines stir

or blue flutings in snow

trailing wings or
 tresses of a goddess
 manes and tails of last night's horses

Our marks are small—cat or rabbit
 bird or girl—the wind
 wipes them clean

like an Etch-a-Sketch
 flipped over
 or death's fat eraser

Where do the dead go

they retract into us like leashes

or rewind into the past
where they spiral
inviolable as the wind

Today's your yahrzeit
"year-time"

Who has seen time

we see only
its tracks on our faces

these tears drawn by the wind

(Featured image from Pexels)

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