

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Eric Howard: Three Poems

Eric Howard · Thursday, August 10th, 2017

Eric Howard studied poetry with Robert Mezey and Karen Swenson at the Claremont Colleges before working as a substitute junior high school, high school, and college teacher while living in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Silver Lake. He later obtained a master's degree in English from California State University while studying prosody with Henri Coulette. He currently lives near the Los Angeles River and its bike path. The poem "Taliban Beach Party" concerns an event put on by the Los Angeles Cacophony Society.

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### Saint John

On a dark night, happy, burning  
with want, I went unnoticed  
from my quiet house in shadow,  
took the back stairs without stopping.  
Disguised, that moonless night,  
in secret and without light,  
no guide but my desire, I walked  
as sure as noon to where he waited  
to know me well, where no one saw.

Night that guided me, I thank you.  
Night that united lover and beloved,  
beloved and Love, night more lovable  
than dawn, you taught my heart to grow flowers  
for him alone as he lay sleeping  
and I touched his hair beneath the fanning cedar.  
He reached so calmly for my neck and wounded me there,  
I hardly felt myself stop breathing,  
but I stayed, and I forgot myself.  
I rested my face on him and let everything go,  
every worry to the grass, all harm forgotten.

[Note: “Saint John” is a translation of a poem by the Spanish mystic poet Saint John of the Cross (1542-91).]

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## To Money

In the rainbow-ceilinged hotel foyer  
 motivational syllables sail  
 out from the follow-your-bliss seminar.  
 The Goldberg Variations rain upon  
 a figure-eighting fly. Conversations  
 buzz around you, arpeggios that start  
 “I love . . .” Outside, a girl with a tattoo  
 that rounds her shoulder slowly works a broom  
 kitchenward, the uneven window panes  
 bending her in silence from youth to age.

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## Side Effects May Include

Amanuensis of the hand on the sides of your life  
 Bipedalism across the young plains in a fur bikini  
 Curtilage of the tongue and throat  
 Demurrage for the weight of the smoke  
 Easement for symptoms that may persist because you’re alive  
 Fraud upon your house  
 Gog and Magog across the San Fernando Valley  
 Hermeneutics of fire giants running uphill  
 Imminence of horror and latex  
 Joinder to *Yellow Wallpaper v. Gregor the Beetle*  
 Kenosis of the bath house and porn set  
 Laches of “you know I still love you”  
 Mitosis of some happy dayglow chick  
 Noema of the man from nowhere on trial for murder  
 Orderliness of the refrigerators that will be cleaned out at 3 P.M.  
 Periphrasis for diving into meat grinders  
 Quintillions of first years of service  
 Replevin of the Worldwide Mad Deadly Hollywood Gangster Computer God  
 Spam from ghosts of your past lives  
 Transubstantiation of all the numbers of the phone system  
 Unclean hands upon the world  
 Viscosity of ketchup or Tapatio  
 Warbling of pharmacists at Kaiser on Sunset  
 Xylographia five years experience \$10 an hour  
 Yodeling internship opportunity  
 Zarzuela of stars and hangers-on and homeless

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