

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

J. P. Dancing Bear: Three Poems

J. P. Dancing Bear · Friday, October 13th, 2023

Living Room

—after an art piece by John Gallaher

These days I appear to be all elegies
and regrets. I cannot find a page that sings to me
unless something is missing. It is as if life has become
a lacuna. I am asking everything to reassemble
and make sense around what is missing. It is
a hard life, this shuffling of the tarot—
just to find a cup that will water a hanged man.

All my friends disappear as more and more sharks
circle and muscle the currents. I saw one drift
across a graying sky. Sometimes I think my friends
might have grown dorsal fins and fallen into the deep
never to sleep. Each elegy is a flower. ...or an ice
cream cone. Some days I think I might be an open book
of lacunae... or erasure. Other days I am just

another black suit ready to sit and listen
to another procession, another remembrance wept
from a podium in a church with its god on full display.
...still others I might be a ghost myself—just think
of it, all those people who I had thought were gone
might be back from a service, sitting in my living
room, remembering and missing me.

*

Observatory

—after Meng Lang

I live in a house on the moon
near the heart of Armstrong's foot-
print, where, even a sliver of light

might fall back to you
238,900 miles away on a good night.

Good night
my lovelies—
all sparkle power grid on the dark side
of a warming planet.

Oh Neil, why did we ever come here?
Was it to scream into the abyss?

Your suit of ghosts always leaping
in my peripheral vision—
into everyone else's night.

The conspiracy theorists chant your name
into the jealous decades,
each a child of pain, each
a broken piece of the earth,
orbiting the lie of a flat planet.

They whisper that they cannot see
the flag, your flag, whenever they study
the moon.

*

Whatever Floats Your Boat

Now gone 22 years
I realize my father never said
the word god
not even those times when he'd miss
the nail head and crush
the nail of his thumb.

He never spoke of belief,
and was fond of saying *what-*
ever floats your boat.

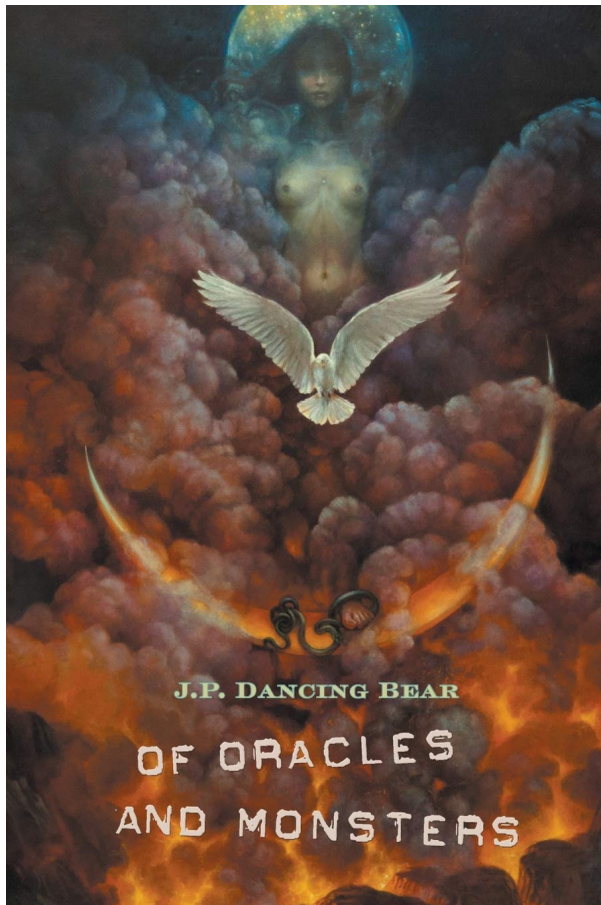
When I went to church with friends
he'd say have fun or *don't*
do anything I wouldn't do.

My dad was a numbers guy,
always admiring the logic of
math. He liked smartasses
and geniuses, Basil Rathbone's
Holmes. And when he laughed

it was as much to himself

as anyone else. This far out
from his life I come
to know his influence
on my own. How I love
the logic of something made
well, though I'll say, "god damn,"

admittedly from my mother's side.



Of Oracles And Monsters by J. P. Dancing Bear

Purchase *Of Oracles And Monsters* by J. P. Dancing Bear

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