

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Jed Myers: Three Poems

Jed Myers · Wednesday, June 22nd, 2016

Jed Myers is a Philadelphian living in Seattle where he's a psychiatrist with a therapy practice. He began to seek publication of his poems as of the events of 9/11/01. His collections include *Watching the Perseids* (Sacramento Poetry Center Book Award) and the chapbook *The Nameless* (Finishing Line Press). Among the honors his work has received is *Southern Indiana Review's* Mary C. Mohr Award. His poems have appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *Nimrod*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Harpur Palate*, *Crab Creek Review*, *The Briar Cliff Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *The New Guard*, and elsewhere.

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## Asylum

I'll offer you passage toward asylum  
 through the canals of my ears—please come  
 now, straight from the radio station.  
 I don't know who you'll find here  
 who speaks your language. But already  
 my grandmother calls to you in her Yiddish  
 as she chops beets for our borscht.  
 Your face, gritty in front page ink—  
 I think you could hide if you had to  
 in any odd shadow. But quick—  
 under these mom-and-pop storefront awnings  
 my eyelids. Please, come back  
 behind the shop, where we live—yes,  
 the kitchen. The future ferments  
 here in our memories' brine. We've pressed  
 fine slices of reddened smoked fish,  
 gift of the parted seas, upon bread  
 fresh-risen on the yeasts of the West.  
 And let us eat by the candles we've dipped  
 in the wax of our histories' hives, our stories  
 a weave, the wool of our sheep  
 on our shoulders. Too many have died—  
 there are all kinds of sudden fire,

and all the sparks one fear—the other comes  
 seeking asylum, what we've secured  
 only a few breaths before, and what  
 shall we offer? Here, my grandfather's chair,  
 and the shawl he brought across the water.

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## Here After

Dying elsewhere is sudden, out  
 in the sun—dying here a white curtain,  
 nurse when you press the right button.  
 Elsewhere is an outdoor market  
 stun-blossom, blood flesh and flatbread  
 charred and shredded, a bone ash spread.  
 Here is a quiet long shock, dumb winter  
 windows' stare at the pallid potatoes  
 and sliced bird on your plastic platter.  
 The dying here and the dying there—  
 you're born to one matter or  
 the other. Chaos will come  
 as magnificently symmetrical viral  
 particles, or circulating free radicals  
 prodding your chromosomes to double  
 and double like burgeoning insurgents' camps, or  
 surgical mishaps, impromptu blasts...  
 and slow or fast, thereafter  
 the dying lasts. What will be  
 the echo won't be explosion or scream  
 or siren, nor the beeping of cardiac  
 monitor till it goes monotone, nor  
 the low lone whimper of someone  
 you've left here after, but this  
 resonance: Once, when you were  
 intact, as the machines wheeled past,  
 the smears being mopped up and all  
 the gathered dispersed, you'd taken  
 someone fresh-numb with loss in your arms,  
 and later, she held another.

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## After Parking at Starbucks

I've opened the door to her dark  
 seat in the car. Mom offers  
 a skeletal arm, skin loose around  
 bone and what thready muscle

remains under blue tortuous veins.  
I bow and take hold with one hand  
a cradle for the creak of her elbow,  
one where stiffened fingers can rest.  
My hesitation's hidden as I am  
its lone witness—something fine  
and brittle might break as I lift it  
away from its place, like that china  
cup I fumbled and dropped soon  
as I'd slid it off of the hutch  
for a better look one morning  
when I was five or six. It had been  
*her* mother's, I heard her sharpened  
voice insist as we stared  
at the scatter of jagged white bits  
on the floor's innocent oak. It was  
what remained of a set—one cup-  
ful of distant comfort. Had I been  
more careful.... Gently I tug on her  
arm, help her stand, and steady her  
imperceptibly as she shuffles  
beside me. The old shatters keep us  
company—a chattering wake.  
There's never a lack of the broken—  
I hear a muffled clatter, a girl  
in pieces it isn't too late to hold.

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