

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

John Compton: Three Poems

John Compton · Wednesday, June 2nd, 2021

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you are the mother of an orphan birth it
sticks to you like a ghost roots deep in
your blood you hear it even when the
mouth is closed you touch the small
hands & fit them inside yours electric
surges through the both of you like a
bulb flashing on & warmth fills your
molecules the face gives a smile no
teeth only gums the tongue flicks
between the lips it cries your instinct
begins & you hold it close to your
breasts it sucks milk from a wound &
latches like a tick: it gains power &
grows

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she pauses in wading the lake waist high
 the water touching parts she forgot had
 existed she slips her hand into the
 murkiness wondering if her hair ever
 felt like this she knew she used to be
 beautiful before age broke her body
 across the floor like a chair she rocks
 herself her feet moving between the silt
 the ducks revolve around her like
 moons before settling in their landing
 they search her she understands she is
 not a tree but could she just raise her
 arms like branches & feel love for a
 moment a foot farther an inch deeper
 she remembers how to heal a wound
 with a band-aid before the children
 were too old to need her she breathes
 she breathes she breathes while
 everyone else has finished letting her
 exist

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my house is a tomb of shadows
memories ghosts the floorboards
smooth from decades of feet pushing
their fibers into a pattern of ware the
walls torn & rebuilt & drywalled layers
of wallpaper & pages of life decorated &
destroyed the ceiling watching &
breaking & being replastered my house
is a documentary untelevised unwritten
a secret it grows it holds us like children
& helps us learn to live protecting us
watching it grows us & kills us & buries
us & waits to be filled the empty only a
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