

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Kate Peper: Three Poems

Kate Peper · Wednesday, June 28th, 2017

Kate Peper has taught creative writing as part of California Poets in the Schools as well as to older adults in retirement communities. She lives just north of San Francisco with her husband Bruce and semi-feral dog Hannah.

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### Later, She Learned He Married And Had A Child

She thought of the marriage  
she almost had, how the ring  
made it seem true and their holiday  
that summer on Lake Michigan,  
feeding each other black cherries in bed.  
His kisses left dark stains on her neck  
she did not want to rub off.

On their last evening,  
they stood on the coarse sand  
and watched something black,  
round, float in the waves.  
*Let's guess, she entreated.*  
*A lost seal? Or a selkie?*  
It bobbed in place as if tethered  
to some invisible weight.  
She turned to him, *No, a child!*

He started back to their rented cabin,  
turned and called, *Are you coming?*  
She shook her head, stood watching  
the waves drain of color.  
*It's just a broken pylon, he said,*  
unlacing his fingers from hers.

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## The Lock Picker

Last night, Christ was under water  
trying to pick the lock to my brain.

When I talked, air bubbled up,  
distorting His face.

In the morning, I cleaned my pond  
of algae and branded my cheeks

with scum from an unconscious  
brush of my hand.

That's when I remembered  
the sales woman at the Gift Faire

who slid a bromeliad alongside  
my display of hand-made cards,

*It looks perfect, even though it's on its way out.*  
Maybe a dying plant is just a dying plant,

but still I pray when I die,  
Christ will have picked my lock,

and my door, closed to Him  
for decades, will open.

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## The Empty Lot

*...for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...*

—Psalms 139:14

So rare in this neighborhood.  
Sandwiched between two homes  
and bordered by thoroughfares.  
Never weed-whacked, never planted,  
no raised vegetable garden.  
The rickety apple tree at its far end  
bears no fruit.

But the robins roost in its crown,  
and the crows meander quietly  
through the fallow field.

I will not see my body as barren.

I rest my hand  
over that empty place and think  
about what is beyond my control, this piece of *wild*.  
Not what I couldn't be  
but how I am made: beautiful.

*(Author photo by Marybeth Adkins.)*

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