Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Mary Meriam: Three Poems

Mary Meriam · Monday, July 18th, 2022

Laurel's Leaving

She alone moon-howls trees' leaves down,
fashions a strapless fall gown,

garlands bare skin with snake-greens
culled from neighborhood queens,

a hat plucked from holly and fir,
then lets those heels that crippled her

die at the moss-rich trunk base
coated with white mildew lace,

and steps barefoot to the scene
on holy ground arrow-clean.

She alone leaves sadness for
a most curious shutting of the door,

a social life in a different town,
a myth, a switcheroo, a buckle-down.

Now she is a tree unshod, unzipped,
she carries greenery fresh and clipped

under a moon undergoing eclipse,
a whole-hearted she with a she she strips.

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Trees

I love this screen of oak and maple trees
hiding me from the boaters on the lake.
I love the fattened leaves in summer's breeze

singing the forest full of symphonies.
When I have any love-life left to make,
I love this screen of oak and maple trees.

When burdened by my sad, old memories,
the screeching hawk, the tick, the lying snake,
I love the fattened leaves in summer’s breeze,

their veiny palms and festive shapes, the bees
and hummingbirds that sip them as they shake.
I love this screen of oak and maple trees

the way most people love their families.
For having none, and for my longing’s sake,
I love the fattened leaves in summer’s breeze.

I listen to the play of green degrees
of pitch and key, the greens the breezes wake
forming this screen of oak and maple trees
bearing the fattened leaves in summer’s breeze.

Originally published in *Love Affairs at the Villa Nelle* (Kelsay Books)

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Dictionary of Owl

Who cares about the redbud tree, its flowers
half-black, half-pink, from winter’s April freeze;
who cares who lives halfway or dies too soon,
the blue jay’s baby squirming on bare ground,
the agonies of blood, the frigid breeze
shaking the fragile sense of April showers;
who cares who craves the heated pools of June,
the lake of boaters buzzing by or drowned.
Two vultures meet me at my open door,
scanning for carrion, the stink of spasms,
the sky-gods pecking rotting flesh for food;
who cares if this strange order ends in good,
or if the chickadee lands in the chasms
of endless carelessness forevermore.

Originally published in *Poetry*

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POOLS OF JUNE by Mary Meriam

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