Cultural Daily

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Matt Bialer: Two New Poems

Matt Bialer · Wednesday, February 19th, 2014

Matt Bialer is the author of six books of poetry including Radius (Les Editions du Zaporogue), Already Here, Ark, Black Powder, The Bloop (all from Black Coffee Press) and Bridge (Leaky Boot Press). His poems have appeared in many print and online journals including La Zaporogue, Green Mountains Review, Gobbet, Forklift Ohio and H_NGM_N.

Cultural Weekly is proud to premiere these two new poems.

TELL THEM WHAT I SAW

They are trying to revive me Floating above the Resus Area I am part Of a study – The Division of Perceptual Research The white patches of heaven on my chest Emergency medical physicians, nurses, technicians Lean over me Outside I can see my wife, two grown sons Weeping, a prayer circle Psalm 34:19 The Lord Always brings us through My son's track and field gear I'm above the nurses station Laughter, tonight's double date At the Well My mind more clear Bright light everywhere The doctor motions for the defibrillator paddles to shock me back I remember, the boys little, we climbed Mt. Greylock – miles Of farms, the curve of the earth They commence cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, even pound my chest I can see the video monitors Placed at the top of the ceiling Psi Effects Altered States Of consciousness If I come back, tell them what I saw 15 feet Above: Two cheetahs Racing across a great yellow plain A finish line Kingdom of Light

PAST LIFE

The nightmares haven't stopped Kicking, thrashing His mother wakes Him, he's screaming 3 year old boy, otherwise
Happy toddler Flopping around in his bed
Like a broken power line Then the actual words:
"Plane on fire! Blue Bear! Little man can't get out!"
At Hobby Lobby – lifts a balsa wood propeller plane out of
The bin "That's not a bomb Mommy. That's a drop tank"
Distinguish World War II planes – P-51 Mustangs, Spitfires, Wildcats
Drowsy in bed, reveals that he flew a Corsair, Japanese shot him down,
Blue bear again, the name of the ship he took off from With my wrinkled
Hands I dust off the photo frame, bleached shot of him, smiling from
The cockpit – 65 years ago

These young parents of a boy, hearing the memories of my decades Lost older brother Boy's father, an oil executive, doesn't know Why he is at this reunion This is crazy USS Natoma Bay San Diego, Grant Hill ballroom Frail veterans at tables: Maps, journals, photographs Chasing his son's memories, not yet Potty trained My brother's memories No one knows what Blue bear means Someone's nickname? He finds the best Friend his boy mentioned – Jack, rear gunner, now in a wheelchair Bullets and bombs exploding everywhere, aircraft overhead Plane right next to him – his friend, my brother, last mission Raid near Iwo Jima, March 3, 1945 Hit head on, middle of The engine Nothing but debris

Boy's father calls Doesn't want to upset me He and his wife believe their little boy – My long dead brother Can they visit? Fly to Springdale From Baton Rouge My big brother 6 feet tall, 21 years old Loved flying Sang on the radio, in a choir Red Sails in the Sunset Before basic training took me to the county fair Water guns, Spin and Win Lots of prizes Down the midway – fireworks Bursts, rings of gold-green stars, twinkle and flutter down An Old lady now, I wear my plaid blouse, black slip-ons Serve A bowl of nuts The boy, five now, calls me Annie Parents Say it's rude He was the only one who ever called me that Our older sister Ruth, gone now Calls her Roof Mortified When Mama took the job, common maid Boy's father asks About the blue bear I shrug, tell them I don't know After They leave, out of a cardboard box, the clear plastic bag – Charred blue teddy bear I can still smell the gasoline

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