

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Megan Merchant: Three Poems

Megan Merchant · Monday, April 11th, 2022

Sculpture

the ordinary machinery of lips / when they press / skin the smell of orange / peeling
light behind paper curtains / a silent movie / how a boat downstream grows small /
a stone in a shoe / the mad patience of love / the shrug of late afternoon / luminous /
the river / a lantern at the base of a mountain / winter / a dry sound / relocated /
tea-stained shadows / beliefs collapsed in a holy body / rapture / newsprint curses /
eyelids / a burial ground / the withered branch / an astonishment of light / a pinch
of turquoise / a bowl of salt / what remains / nameless /

*

“The Parsonage Garden at Nuenen in Spring,”

When I can't write, I panic-buy five gallons of white
paint and spend the quiet brushing over our lives before,

when we were occupied and didn't know. I think of Van
Gogh, how, in a video, a Dutch woman taught me the proper way

to say his name, when my son interrupted to share another clip—
animals mourning the loss of their mates. The way they howl,

he explained, is beautiful. Both catch in the back of my throat.
I have taught him to celebrate our wounds, hoping against reason

that he will not grow up looking for fault lines and think they are love.

//

On Van Gogh's birthday, I paint a white box on our wall where
leaves shadow the early light. The flicker of each day is the same,

and entirely not. I cannot describe what has been stolen, what
has been taken from us all, but I can tell you about the outbreak of spring,

about the ant hills that are piling at the base of trees, how they pattern

the bark like brush strokes adding texture, adding lines.

*

when asked about the sound of dark rain, you said jazz

you said snow as day of the week when it only lightly coated
branches you said loneliness is using a dull knife to open

the curvature of a shadow, you said this is how to slow time,
by tracing the amount of light an hour can hold blue

along a wall, then washed the darkest thing you couldn't say
from my hair, where you whispered salt, when

I spilled the wine, you said that mistakes aren't marble, are
what happens when you are living someplace else,

you said my name as a kind of hallway, you said that even
a shirt strewn on the floor has a viewpoint,

you said wings are really slapping the shit out of wind when
we couldn't hear them overhead because the wind

was slapping back, you said something late enough that every
room had already been cleared, every excuse

forgiven, and then you said come here.

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BEFORE THE FEVERED SNOW by Megan Merchant

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