
Cultural Daily

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Roderick Bates: Three Poems

Roderick Bates · Wednesday, May 17th, 2017

Roderick Bates has published poems in *The Dark Horse*, *Stillwater Review*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Hobo Camp Review*, *Red Eft Review*, *Ekphrastic Review*, and *Rat's Ass Review* (which he now edits). He also writes prose, and won an award from the International Regional Magazines Association for an essay published in *Vermont Life*. He is a Dartmouth graduate with a degree in Religion.

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Watershed

For Matthew, 1971 — 2010

Somewhere in Stratton there is a line
along the height of the mountains
where the rain, landing, divides
to run downhill one way or another.

On one side it slips down to Winhall Brook,
the West River, and the Connecticut.
On the other it enters Tanner Brook,
the Battenkill and the Hudson.

Is there any knowing, any recognition,
when, somewhere off Long Island,
those waters again swirl and mix?

And what of us, my friend,
after this harsh parting —
will we ever mingle again,
or know it if we do?

Antidote for the Car

for Wallace Stevens

I left a car in Vermont.
And sleek it was, upon a hill.
It dared the tangled wilderness
around that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it
and snarled around, no longer mild.
The car sunk down upon the ground
and bent and crumpled there.

It found communion everywhere,
its metal brown and bare.
Until it gave of bird and bush,
like everything else in Vermont.

How Do You Know Love?

Once was a movie date with a softly pretty woman
with piles of curly hair. *The Elephant Man* was playing,
and there was a painful scene which made me wince
and turn my head away.
When I did, there she was, her head turned to me,
with the same stricken look on her freckled face.

Another time it was falling asleep making love,
and later drifting awake
as she stirred purposefully beneath me,
motion so basic
one did not need to be awake to respond in kind.

And years later it was leaving a party
and walking through the snow to a footbridge
where we stood above a frozen river
as large, soft flakes fell and she reached
for my zipper. When we came back
a friend asked what was on the collar
of her jacket. And she told him.

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