

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Scott Silsbe: "One Night at the Pittsburgh Tow Pound"

Scott Silsbe · Wednesday, July 6th, 2016

Scott Silsbe was born in Detroit and now lives in Pittsburgh. His poems and prose have appeared in numerous periodicals including *Third Coast*, *Nerve Cowboy*, *Chiron Review*, *The Chariton Review*, and the *Free State Review*. He is the author of two poetry collections: *Unattended Fire* (Six Gallery Press, 2012) and *The River Underneath the City* (Low Ghost Press, 2013; 2nd ed.: 2015). He was also a finalist for the *Cultural Weekly's* 2014 Jack Grapes Poetry Prize. He is currently at work on a new collection of poems.

One Night at the Pittsburgh Tow Pound

I'd gotten the last customers out of the bakery just before 3pm.
 I locked the door behind them and started to clean up the place.
 Two days before Christmas. Still needed to do some shopping
 and drive home to Detroit. There was a girl waiting there for me.
 After locking up the bakery, I drove down to Eide's to get some
 presents for the girl. It took me a while, but I found some things.
 When I went back down to Penn Avenue to where I had parked,
 my car wasn't there. My first thought was that it had been stolen.
 But then I remembered the little no parking signs on the meters
 and decided it had been towed. I found a pay phone, called up
 the tow pound, and sure enough, they had it. So I walked those
 20 or so blocks to the tow pound under the 31st Street Bridge.
 When I made it to the tow pound, there was a line of pissed off
 individuals like myself out the door and down the steps of the
 pound's trailer where you settled up with a cashier behind glass.
 I stood in line and I waited. When I got up to the glassed cashier,
 she said I couldn't get the car back, as it was in my father's name.
 She said I could have him fax them there in the little trailer, and if
 it was on his letterhead and it said it was okay for me to pay for it,
 I could get the car back then. I tried explaining that that was not
 possible, but she told me that wasn't her problem. I asked her if
 I could grab some things out of the car and she said that I could.
 When I had been in the line waiting for my turn, I'd overheard
 the cashier say they were having trouble with the electric fence

that kept in the towed cars. I walked out to my car through that electric fence, which was open and not going anywhere. I got in the car. I sat in the driver's seat. I started the car up. I sat there for a little while, looking at the open fence, thinking things over. And then, with the lights still off, I drove the car out of the pound. I pulled the car into a parking lot to consider what had happened. Then, not seeing any flashing lights behind me, I headed north.

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