
Cultural Daily

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Tony Wallin-Sato: Three Prose Poems

Tony Wallin-Sato · Thursday, April 7th, 2022

Idaho

Small farmhouse in the bottleneck. Every morning while brewing coffee, a small doe and her fawn graze the parcel. They strut with their noses to the ground beneath an apple tree. The dirt road around the lake is a stone's throw away from Canada. I cannot travel to its end. Our northern neighbor has too strict border checks. I am what you call a flight risk. So was Allen Ginsburg. I take it as a complement. A summer storm swells, ironically travelling from Canada, and keeps me housebound. The fire is going. The deer somewhere in the forest. Ghosts taking residency in the barn. I spend the nights on a broken recliner reading a translation of Celine's North. Politically, he was a monster. Writerly, he was a genius. Ginsburg visited him on his deathbed, so I don't feel guilty enjoying his work. The Pacific Northwest makes me feel old.

Maybe it's the shingles I acquired. The sun sets in a different place. It rises from the snow. I can see my reflection in the Douglas fir and Lodgepole Pines. They comment on my thoughts. There aren't many people around to wave to. Except for the old man at the crossroads. He has a wolf in his yard. I can't decide if this is real or not.

Arkansas

Patrick fell head first. The contact woke me up from a train departure. Freud says when you dream of train travel you are on your way to death. Does that mean one rides a train while awake to feel alive? The 500 gallon moonshine wine barrel caused Patrick's knock-out. It blocked most of the hallway and sat in front of a bootlegger-era secret door. Straight ether. Like huffing gasoline as if the world were black and white and movies had no sound. I got out of bed to sniff the syphon. What else is there to do at 19? Patrick's smile was a refinery full of broken windows. He never told me his age but he could have said 50 or 90. The fastest motorcycle I ever rode was his built-from-the-ground-up Triumph flying the confederate flag detailed on the gas tank. It's interesting what you let sly when adrenaline is on the line. There's nothing like breathing in highway air and pure ether. Reading Hunter S. Thompson is as close to a description as possible. When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro Hunter used to say. Patrick and I periodically passed out until the rest of the house woke up. Snow began to fall across Mulberry Mountain. The goat was chasing the chickens. The police/post office was opening their doors at the bottom of the hill. I fed the horse and rolled a cigarette. Patrick went into the kitchen to make everyone breakfast.

New Mexico

I made a sign that read this machine kills fascists and taped it to my rucksack. I walked for what seemed 100 miles. The soles of my shoes melted atop the asphalt like an adobe hut. The desert sun animated the cactus like ghouls and somewhere Ralph Steadman was sketching horses. Circling vultures began to speak in tongues: the most beautiful translation of Illuminations I ever heard. A few towns back a police officer stopped me on the side of the highway. Threatened me with a ticket until I told him I was on college break. What's up with the face tattoo? he asked. That doesn't disqualify you for school, I replied. Summer was a poor choice for the desert route cross country trekking. I was heading east. Or maybe north? It was possible I was coming from Mexico but I never remembered my times spent there anyways. I passed the sign that read Panhandle, forlorn death. A red Subaru skid to a stop. Dust only found on route 66 filled the air and a friendly hand gestured me forward. An old Mexican-American grandfather and his grandson. I haven't seen someone as young as you hitchhiking in 50 years the old man said. His mind drifted as if standing on a tarmac. I was a student during the protests in the 60s. We gave San Jose hell. His grandson was not amused. I peeked outside the window and tried to remember where it was I was going.

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