

Poetry

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Brown

My deepest night is not black
but brown, an earthen cave
beyond midnight,

a town darkened, shrouded
in rust, gloomy ochre,
decaying earth tones,
brown, brown, brown.

as only brown can be, not
the oxblood of new shoes
not the khaki of a smog-
shrouded dawn, but brown,
pungent, of the earth.

Satan is most likely not red,
but brown, Lord of Darkness,
mystery of life, brown cast down
into fields of brown, nights

of brown, muddy, dark,
light-absorbing, truth denying, all
encompassing dreary brown,

brown, brown.

Imperfection

We see the faults in other lives so quick
yet so ignore the monstrous sins in ours,
a human trait so often seen, so sick,
and filled with pride to poison every hour.

We cure the aches in other lives so neat,
in our small minds the remedies so clear
that we never understand those folks' defeat
and have no idea what it is they fear.

“Read *this book*! See *this* man! Get yourself some
help!” How could you let yourself drift afar
from *our* idea of what you should become;
just don't suggest our own minds be ajar.

Whatever fault there is in us is best
Left covered, hoping others give it rest.

Yielding Prayer

Oh, God,
I come on bended knee
To thank You for
what I could be.

These gifts of mine
can serve no end
Unless I take
some task to tend.

Please help guide
these hands of mine,
And help me change
my will to Thine.

Reflection

Walking into the wind, long legs, strong back,
He was of the wind, in the wind, tall and
Splendid, striding oak tree flexing from strength
Tempered from bending for many long years.

At ten I rushed to fill his tracks, my steps
Three or four to his one long stride, cane poles
In hand, a sack of food, the morning ours,
The dappled woods whispered of our passing.

We spoke softly, old father, young son, and peered
Into the mumbling bamboo thicket while
Walking toward the secret pond that danced in
Sunlight, glistening diamonds, emerald clusters.

A grassy spit trespassed into the pond,
Private peninsula, our own Eden.
One willow weeping made a canopy
Shading magic water from the sunlight.

Bracing into the willow trunk we leaned
Out in the shaded water as it stilled.
Emeralds, diamonds, vanished in the
Tea-green watery calm, the pond a mirror.

We appeared there, son and father, and then
The sky behind us, a marching army,
Crusading cumulus, moving quickly
As life will, as life does, too soon ending.

Decades later, late in winter, dad died.
At his graveside I stood numbly watching
As caravans of courageous clouds passed
Paying homage to old friends, dad and me.

Acorns, they say, fall near the oak; so I
Become my own father, bent before wind,
Friend of all willows, lover of waters,
Magic and strangeness rejoice in my genes.