

Cindy Hochman & Bob Heman – Three Collaborations

COLLABORATION #17

a barn made out of popsicle sticks
and the horses are made of papier-mâché
and cast shadows that are only painted on
in a strange menagerie of optical illusions
we can crawl through like they are music
the clomping of horses and the lowing of cows
only a counterpoint to the imagined voice of the wind
and the turbulence of oceans along with its echoes
that only sometimes start to inhabit us
as we wade alone through the muck and the maelstrom
gathering together animals we always imagined were real
like a latter-day ark from the Book of Noah
floating on a sea of unopened words
delivered in peace by a white-winged dove

COLLABORATION #57

the word was larger than the space it occupied
it had nothing to do with fonts or fountains
it was about the possibilities that lived inside
and the people who dared to write about them

but some words are smaller than they seem
they squirm and shrink upon the page
and don't add anything to even the best sentences
and can ruin a poem like ants at a picnic

but like ants we are always hungry for nourishing new words
so we form colonies and march uphill in straight lines
searching for the obvious and not-so-obvious
peeking under crevices where language starts

but sometimes what we find occupies no space at all
and that's where inspiration begins

COLLABORATION #61

the fingers are only sometimes an explanation
and only when the toes are the question

and remain too complicated to be counted upon
this isn't a matter of ten little piggies
but the way they sometimes gather in groups
like poets at readings and penguins on ice
and the way they rearrange all that surrounds them
as if trying to make sense of the topsy-turvy universe
that only sometimes points in their direction
but mostly swings wildly on its axis
almost daring them to grab on
with their curled-up fingers and toes
as they try not to tumble into the ever-threatening future
of opposable thumbs and phantom limbs

Collaborations by **Cindy Hochman and Bob Heman** have appeared in *Otoliths*, *Unlikely Stories*, *Mannequin Haus*, *Have Your Chill*, *Clockwise Cat*, and *Live Mag!* They have written 75 of them since June 2017 and included in the chapbook *The Number 5 Is Always Suspect* (from Presa Press).