

Julia Carlson – Five Poems



Featured Poet

Dusk

I hear rain but
it is not raining.
Through the kitchen window
I see no raindrops
splattering on the porch railings.
I go and stand
at the open door, looking.
It is only wind in the trees
blowing over the leaves
shaking against each other
making the sound of rain.
I am glad for this wind
rousing me from my work
compelling me to go outside
to breathe in the fading day.

Grief

a hundred years ago
and still in some cultures today
people wore black and stayed at home
six months, a year, or even more
until the aching numbness wore away.

now your job gives 5 days
and that's for close family

and nothing for a pet.

Midnight

The cat kneads his bed
content in his sacred world
of dead sparrow or rat.

I watch him, envy
flowing slow from sight to brain
in my sacred world.

Quiet, I sit on
the sofa listening to
the heater rumbling.

Standing to close the
drapes I look out the window.
A car passes, fades.

As I lie down, I
am foe to my ebbing thoughts.
Sleep looms, gray spectre.

Translate:

I often went to the countryside.

Souvent j'allais à la campagne

When I arrived, there was no one

Quand je suis arrivée, il n'y avait personne

I was eating when the telephone rang

J'étais en train de manger quand le téléphone a sonné

I was reading when a thief knocked on the door

J'étais en train de lire quand un voleur a frappé à la porte

I became afraid when he entered my house

J'ai eu peur quand il est rentré dans ma maison

He said he was taking a walk (& looking for money)

Il m'a dit qu'il faisait un petit ballade (& cherchait de l'argent)

Why did he come here?

Pourquoi est-il venu ici?

If he had asked someone would have told him

S'il il avait demandé à n'importe qui, il aurait su

I was impoverished, desperate.

j'étais complètement à plat, sans sous.

Tithe

I heard you died
you were pretty young
I forgot you were so young
I think of you as a man who stayed a boy
who never grew up
who raged on about the same things
you hated when you were just an angry boy.
people only want to say nice things about the dead
but they didn't know you the way I did
I know a lot of your evil secrets
I hold them in me still
& if someone asks me
do I know any secrets about you
I'll say sure I do and here they are
& dump the whole lot into the tithing dish.

Julia Carlson received her BA (Philosophy) and MA (Social Work) from Boston University, and a Diploma in Linguistics (Universite de Toulouse-Mirail, France). She is author of two chapbooks, *Turn of the Century* (Cloudkeeper Press, 2008) and *Drift* (March Hare Press, 2012). Her recent collection, *Prayer for the Misbegotten* was published by Oddball Press in 2017; her next collection, *Monday Poems* is due out in 2019. Her poems have been published in *Lyrical Somerville*, *Wilderness House Literary Review*, *Bagel Bards Anthologies* (& was Editor of #5), and *Muddy River Poetry Review*. She is the recipient of a Davis-Kidd Poetry Award and 1st Prize, 2017 Poetrykit Summer Competition (UK). She Makes her home in Cambridge, MA, likes rock and roll, and a wee dram on a cold night.