

## Laura Stringfellow -- Two Poems

### Adumbratio

Only your crease on the pillow remains.

The house is at the end  
of a long sigh that says, *he is gone*  
*from here, a vanished wind.*  
In the corner—a brown moth  
that, on occasion, flies into light.

The yard is vacant, folding  
chairs open in invitation  
to the luxury of ghosts—  
backyard in which you, asking my permission,  
kissed me for the first time  
under Orion, commenting that it plagued you  
the way it moved across the sky—

Now, here, in early evening,  
I feel the sun move across  
my back and arms until  
my shadow, over the floor,  
is cast into a cross,

a compass of no beginning and no end.  
And I feel Orion circling  
me—the eyes of many pointed stars  
moving in the manner of kaleidoscopes  
until each quietly opens and shuts in waiting.

The desert opens and shuts. The sun  
grazes my bed too quickly. It will  
never hold still—the light, the dark,  
the universe in constant constellation.  
I have only one request of you: Help me

hold the sun a moment between us.

## The Hero Returns From Somewhere Under the Sun

You came back, cruelly.

All summer,  
I had become accustomed to your ghost,  
Felt its outline against my face.  
I would try sometimes, mostly at night,  
To recall the features, your brown skin,  
The scar over your third eye looking

Away. But you were only a spirit that circled  
Like a slow moving fan, its shadow  
A turning wheel against the ceiling.  
One day, with the sun behind me,  
I saw against the ground what I took to be my body.  
But cursive m's like birds came out of me.

Last night, in dream, I felt  
Your mouth in full flesh  
On my neck. You whispered,  
*You won't miss me when I'm gone.*  
When you came back, you added another  
Chapter to the story. Still, something tells me  
It will all end somewhere in a yard with the leaves  
Flying in desperation from the trees.

**Laura Stringfellow** writes both verse and prose poetry, often exploring themes of transformation, woundedness, and interdependence in her poetry. She grew up in the Southern US, has worked most often as a university instructor and as a professional tutor, and holds an MA in English and an MFA in Creative Writing.