

Michael Ansara – Five Poems



Feature

End of Summer 2017

In this summer and fall of our disquiet,
the peach trees cracked
under the burden of their bounty.

The apple trees seemed blissful
in their fruitfulness.
Hummingbirds floated in the garden,

their throat gorgets gorgeous,
changing color in the summer light
like the shimmer of oil thinning on water.

Our grandchildren each
seemed to grow another inch.
Everywhere was a lush excess.

On the manure pile, volunteer pumpkins,
dozens of giant orange orbs
among green vines and too large leaves.

The deer emerged at dawn, stepping out
of their dense woods for a banquet,
tough teeth chewing the plentiful seeds, firm flesh.

And each morning we woke among all this
and were dismayed.

Yellowstone in Winter

For My Friend, Kim Clerc

The flies of Yellowstone in winter live
unseasonably, hovering
within inches of water.

Heat breaks through,
heat alive within the mineral speck;
a life chain that climbs hot and frothy

up finally to flies, persistent, precarious.
An unexpected gust can send any one
soaring toward the sun. Too high.

In the white cold of Yellowstone I was watching flies,
when you slung that rough rope

over the rafter
in a bare Montana cabin,
when you chose to tilt that chair.

The filmmaker John Frankenheimer remembers driving Bobby on the night of June 4th 1968

Go faster
He said that night And so I did
Until he said Life is short
Slow down And it was
And it did slow down And I did

The reel of night runs Re-runs
A picture black Some white
Puddled blood On a black floor
Black shoes Black suit shadow
Halo of light The white
Jacket of the busboy Cradling

These days I seek Company
On bar stools Sprockets unspool
Film slaps Grows brittle
I make epic Fantasies in Technicolor
I work to forget Feisty bantams
I try no longer To think
In the small Heroic form

George Washington's Teeth

Ivory

 pulled from the pink
Unblemished, white
 from black, sold, bought,
Not stolen!
 Nine teeth. 122 shillings.

The familiar never smiling mouth--
 thin, grim, always aware of destiny, choosing
 not to be king--
Hiding a disconsolate mandible
 desolate
Reborn with the false,
 not wooden.

All men are created equal ...

Some men are forced to sell
 their teeth,
See children on the block,

This is the story of our birth:
 so much extracted,
Red clay turned over
 black hands on the plow
Nine teeth for a white mouth
 122 shillings
One-third the going rate.

Singularities

One unseen shooting star;
One crystallized flake
teeter tottering the mountainside into slide.
One glance; one spark;
one lightning strike spawning a tornado of fire.

There is always one last one:

One Ribbed Slitshell
 in the sand.
One Xerces Blue

by the bay by itself.
One Silver Trout in Dublin Pond
watching
the Yellow Perch swallow the last egg.

One last Heath Hen,
Booming Ben, strutting in the early mornings
on the Vineyard, alone
on the mating grounds, calling -- only echoes.

Michael Ansara came to writing poetry late. He spent many years as an organizer and activist and then owned three businesses. His work has appeared in *Salamander*, *Ibbetson St.*, *Web Del Sol* and other publications. Michael is on the board of Mass Poetry (www.masspoetry.org) and was a co-founder of the organization. He lives in Carlisle, MA.