

Sandy Benitez – Three Poems

Bleeding Hearts

Before moving to Cheyenne,
into a second story house
on Blackjack Way,
I pondered a flower garden.
Would anything survive
in this unforgiving climate
where Summer escaped
and roamed the plains
for three short months,
if we were lucky.

The prior occupants
planted bleeding hearts
beside the garage door,
one on each side.
They were dainty,
heart-shaped flowers;
vibrant red against vanilla beige.

To my surprise,
they continued to flourish and grow
despite bitterly frigid winds
and mounds of packed snow
that arrived early in October,
relentless until May.

My husband despised them;
they weren't to his liking.
He preferred exotic foliage
of orchids and palms.
Planned to tear out the hearts,
leave them bleeding
on the side of the road.

Hearing my drawn out sighs,
he transplanted the hearts
to a quaint spot
below the bay window
where they nested
beside orange marigolds,
pink asters, and a large fern.

This menagerie of fauna and flora
would go on to thrive
season after season.
This land wasn't made for the weak,
it never was.

House of Dust

After the windstorm that lasted for days,
we gathered our brooms and dustpans,
the vacuum cleaner, rags, and cans of
lemon-scented furniture spray.

We already knew the wind brought dust,
how it covered every nook and cranny.
The windows, which were shut tight,
were filthy, as were the entranceways

and the front porch with its ceramic planters.
Even the unwanted birds nest
wobbling atop the lantern by the front door
was covered in dust and debris.

There were no birds to be seen,
at least they were smart enough to keep away.
Still, this house had always kept us warm
and safe. The walls never trembled in fear,

though they too were coated in dust;
the type that clings to you, spreads its ire
with every movement and breath. Yes,
the walls definitely needed to be scrubbed.

The Entomologist and Butterfly Specialist (Found Poem)

leads a tranquil butterfly walk
the first Saturday of every month
to help intellectuals, students,
misfits, and daydreamers to identify
butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies,
and moths.

The walk includes wetlands and dreams where visitors might be able to capture and observe the insects close up.

The free walk is scheduled from 9 a.m. to noon. Flying and floating are not permitted on the premises.

Because of the surreal, sleepy conditions, some species may remain in dormancy.

Visitors might see tiger swallowtail, lorquin's admiral, mourning cloak, chalcedon checkerspot, red admiral, perplexing hairstreak, common gray hairstreak, and possibly acmon blue.

Bring hand lens, binoculars, bird book, sturdy walking shoes, hat, insect repellent, warm milk, and cookies. Leave behind reality and to-do lists. If there's been recent rain or nightmares, call to confirm the walk.

Sandy Benitez writes poetry and fiction. She is the founding editor of Flutter Press and *Poppy Road Review*. Her latest poetry chapbook, *The Lilac City*, was published by Origami Poems Project. She's been published in over 135 print and online literary journals since 2006. Sandy's also authored five poetry chapbooks and has been published in four anthologies. Her first novel, a gothic fantasy, *The Rosegiver*, was published in February 2016.