

## Joan Colby – Three Poems

### **KNOT**

Not the simple bow,  
A child's accomplishment  
Securing the shoe, the  
Forward march.

Not the craft of scouts  
Earning a badge of practice,  
How effort earns applause.

Not the sailor's complex  
And significant twists,  
Nor the hangman's 13 turns.

Not the double nor the slip,  
A love-knot grips  
And cannot be undone  
Only sliced by something  
Sharp and handy  
As a tongue.

### **FROM A LINE BY ROETHKE V**

*Fleeing the heart's blankness, I turn to*  
Red echoes, a crypt of skulls,  
Historic grimaces, how the waves engrave  
Shorelines, how damselflies hover.

O numbness, the death-in-life attenuations.  
Put on the gloves of a dancing woman.  
Linger before the mirror. Gather the lilies  
Of affliction. Everywhere, the bees  
Are prostrate, the noses of the bats frost.  
In a dark room, someone is crying.  
Someone is feeling something more than nothing.

## WHEN THE WIND CHANGES

When the wind changes, the horses  
Nicker and race across the pasture,  
Hooves carving hieroglyphs from dry clay.

They won't be caught, the wind tells them  
How a halterless world beckons the  
Fortunate. They dance skittish with notions.

But ages of domestication settle like steel  
In their mouths, girth them with patience  
Until they pause beneath the trees

Waiting for someone to lead them.

**Joan Colby** has published widely in journals such as *Poetry*, *Atlanta Review*, *South Dakota Review*, *The Spoon River Poetry Review*, *New York Quarterly*, *the new renaissance*, *Grand Street*, *Epoch*, and *Prairie Schooner*. Awards include two Illinois Arts Council Literary Awards, Rhino Poetry Award, the new renaissance Award for Poetry, and an Illinois Arts Council Fellowship in Literature. She was a finalist in the GSU Poetry Contest (2007), , Nimrod International Pablo Neruda Prize (2009, 2012), and received honorable mentions in the North American Review's James Hearst Poetry Contest (2008, 2010). She is the editor of Illinois Racing News and lives on a small horse farm in Northern Illinois. She has published 11 books including *The Lonely Hearts Killers*, *The Atrocity Book* and her newest book from Future Cycle Press is *Dead Horses*. FutureCycle has just published *Selected Poems*. A chapbook *Bittersweet* is forthcoming from Main Street Rag Press next winter.