

Steve Klepetar

Mirage

By now the pond has disappeared,
swallowed up by reeds.
One morning a deer stood on my driveway
in early morning fog, then leapt over grass
towards the woods beyond.
All day my palms itched, and I walked
around with my eyes cast down.
The heat was terrible inside my head.
Even birds felt tension among the leaves,
even frogs remained silent among rocks and mud.
You stepped out into the water, your hair
streaming wild around your neck and back.
You swam through the heat.
Your body shimmered like a golden mirage.
All night I held you, terrified you would disappear
through some doorway burned at dawn into the amber sky.

Walls of Glass

We bent toward the light as sun moved slowly
across the sky. We looked out and watched
the river gliding past, its silver skin gleaming
at noontime, a jagged memory of joy.
We listened to birds as they argued over terrain.
Bullies sent the small and weak fluttering
through the trees.
We pressed our hands against walls of glass.
Our breath caught and clung to the smooth sides.
Again and again we flung ourselves, as if bodies
could seep like vapor and vanish along the trails.
Again and again our voices swirled around our ears.
Nobody watched us as we cursed and cried.
Nobody came to quiet us or beat us back.
Our mattresses lay undisturbed on the hard floor.
We won't remember this tomorrow, or if so, only
as a dream we shared, suffering in the hard times,
with our children locked away somewhere like ghosts
trapped in an attic, causing the lights to flicker
on and off as they wail forgotten behind a crumbling door.

Whale Watching

You begin with a day torn from the sea,
a cold day in June with rain and fog,
waves leaping at your boat.
Last night was so quiet, darkness like velvet,
and trees whispering.
If sleep was a potion, you would drink it down,
letting the burning liquid pour over your lips,
feeling it spill, scalding your chest and neck.
If sleep were a charm, you would hang it
from your ear, let it dangle like a talisman
from a land rich with snakes and golden birds.
You begin again with a night trimmed from grass,
hung on your wall to shimmer in streetlight shadows.
In your dream a fin whale breaks the water
beside your boat, just for a moment, then is gone.
You gasp with delight at the smoothness of its black flesh.

Steve Klepetar lives in the Berkshires in Massachusetts. His work has appeared in such journals as *Chiron*, *Deep Water*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Offcourse*, *Poppy Road Review*, *Snakeskin*, *Voices Israel*, *Ygdrasil*, and many others. Several of his poems have been nominated for Best of the Net and the Pushcart Prize. Klepetar is the author of fourteen poetry collections and chapbooks, the most recent of which include *How Fascism Comes to America* (Locofo Chaps), *Why Glass Shatters* (One Sentence Chaps), and *o filho da bebedora de café* (*The Coffee Drinker's Son*), translated into Portuguese by Francisco Jose de Carvalho.