



Tim Suermond -- Feature

5 Poems

Never Catching The Big One

My father is down by the river,
fishing—something he never did when he was alive.
I walk up close but don't say a word. We've both
learned to watch and speak little. My father jerks
his line and brings in—yes, it's true—a dilapidated shoe!
It's so damn ridiculous we have to laugh. With that
I walk away, quite satisfied. My father doesn't need
me to help him reel in the other shoe.

Falling Asleep While Reading Milosz

It wasn't his fault—
having spent the day doing nothing,
my conking out early was preordained
and minutes after the night arrived
women were waving with scarves
from the top of minarets—a fast dream
that even faster had me stopping along a river
where men were chopping wood
under a sky elegant as silk and rough
as sandpaper, an excellent combination.
Good, hard work, but I wanted to move on
to the city whose outskirts I saw through
the geometric maze of tree branches—
having lunch on a side street settling over me,
the meat thick and the salad to savor—
the women from the minarets showing up
and someone asking “Is there a Doctor Catchfly
in the house?” and I opened the book again to check.

March Madness All Year Round

I can drive with the best of them,
but it's the finish that betrays me—
the kissing the ball off the glass too softly,
too hard.

All the hours I put in at the lonely gym
has inched progress at a snail's pace,
but the effort hasn't been wasted—
from the top

of the cheap metal bleachers the court
expands into everything that is, was
and will be—my wife who's certain she
can't make

the cake come out right, makes the cake
come out right and from this perch of mine
I drain the twenty footer—every time,
every time it's required.

Milk Street

The artists and the crockery gangs are long gone,
but when the wind swirls you can often feel their presence
and see some of them, for an instant, outlined in ice blue.
To the east the sea welcomes ships white as gulls, generations
up deep in the sky, saddled with paintings, plates tough as steel,
tea cups beside the good book on the ferries free of lamentation.

Mozart

Not really. It's mostly about me,
which is usually the way things shake out.

But it's nice invoking a genius
to get inspiration and attention. He must

have strolled along the Salt River in Salzburg
many times, the river I'm at now, my head

half in the clouds, half on the lookout
for the many manifestations of cherry strudel.

Wherever he is now I'm sure Mozart is telling
the wonderful dirty jokes guaranteed to make

the ladies with the powdered hair and powdered
breasts happily blush and boldly ask for more..

No everlasting music will ever come from me,
but the jokes do seem to be there when most needed—

even though my women and I are older, and we swear
we've finally grown up. I hear the ghost of Mozart

saying, "It has to happen," and it's what I convey
to the boy who asks for some coins while I fumble

through my pocket and notice him point up at the dart
blue castle, as if it was home, mine as well as his.

Tim Suermondt is the author of three full-length collections of poems: *Trying To Help The Elephant Man Dance* (The Backwaters Press, 2007), *Just Beautiful* (New York Quarterly Books, 2010) and *Election Night And The Five Satins* (Glass Lyre Press, 2016) — along with three chapbooks. He has poems published in *Poetry*, *The Georgia Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Blackbird*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *december Magazine*, *Plume Poetry Journal*, *The Southeast Review*, *Poetry East* and *Stand Magazine*, among others. He is a book reviewer for Cervena Barva Press and a poetry reviewer for *Bellevue Literary Review*. He lives in Cambridge (MA) with his wife, the poet Pui Ying Wong.