

Tomas O’Leary – Two Poems

Vetting the Outlier

The neighborhood is us, this side.
Across the street a guy watches
our wholesome, consensual give and take.
So what, we’re not self-conscious.
But he gives us the creeps.

Well cushioned in his wicker chair from dawn to dusk
he’s stuck on us. We’re not paranoid, we just
don’t like the vibe we get as we perform
our innocent foreplays and collusions,
the way good neighbors cope.

We pass around binoculars
hoping to catch some tell-tale twitch
suggestive of approval or disgust
at how he registers the moral aura
of us, the busy ones.

Three years of his shameless surveillance
finally gets us off our guarded asses
to send an emissary, me, to say hello.
He speaks through eyes that say hello in turn.
Elated, I walk back, say, “He’s okay.”

Going Back

When I think of the lost
generations of myself as they
wind like ribbons of tripe around
the handsome head of some
astonished ancestor

I trigger a blizzard of Celts
from the skies of my forebears
and wonder what wisdom I’ll forage
from a head rolling loose in the snow
or a bowl of steaming porridge.

If blood were less thick, and water

less true to its flowing, I sense
I would still be obtuse
in the manner of cracking
the bones of my thoughts; yet

time, as it captures my being there
now, might cut me some slack
for the delving. If I find my own head
in the snow, I will know
it's a bad time to visit.

Tomas O'Leary has published 4 books of poetry, most recently *In the Wellspring of the Ear: poems new & selected* from Lynx House Press. His earlier titles are *Fool at the Funeral*, *The Devil Take a Crooked House*, & *A Prayer for Everyone*. MFA in poetry, MA in expressive therapies, his years of teaching evolved into working & playing with people who have Alzheimer's, which he continues to do. His Irish accordion was made in China, long before the trumped-up tariff tantrum would have priced it way out of his range.