

Mark Vogel

Low hanging fruit

When you live close enough to smell
the intention in the breeze, the moist ground,
then phrasing becomes like clothes layered,
the conclusion known,
for again power and money have spoken,
and it is dismaying to remember when plenty was plentiful
enough to fund bees and deer and birds, (us),
even the white hissing geese,
the green walking trail by the river,
not to mention the mission trip to the Congo.
When the future seemed to stretch on for years,
and you could watch for hours the snake trail off,
gone down the hole, disdaining the use of the rattle,
when there was time for talk about learning,
and delegated investigation to notice rot
in the plywood/to call in the maintenance crew
who needed work anyway. But in this wordless wind
no one is reflective, and only mold has been given grant money
and sufficient time to mature, and the faculty
have grown grizzled, with too much committee time
causing resentment to fester, until without humor
the photos show the low hanging fruit,
the easy always the first to go,
like the kid eating first the icing that makes
the cupcake good. By god, where is Ram Dass
and sufficient training for biology teachers?
Where are supervisors willing to see what you are?
No time to explain to those in charge
how so much has already happened,
when those in bad uniforms were allowed
to implement the narrow, so it is tiresome
this early morning after sleep wouldn't come,
to detail the trail through the grass,
the bald reasoning, the explanation for
the Dean's paunch gone wild,
or why it takes four days to create as diversion
the mission statement no one will read,
describing so thoroughly the frivolous butt
shaking already nearly forgotten.

Mark Vogel has published short stories in *Cities and Roads*, *Knight Literary Journal*, *Whimperbang*, *SN Review*, and *Our Stories*. Poetry has appeared in *Poetry Midwest*, *English Journal*, *Cape Rock*, *Dark Sky*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *Broken Bridge Review* and other journals. He is Professor of English at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, and directs the Appalachian Writing Project.