

# 9 POEMS

By Carolyn Adams

*Poetry Editor Hezekiah writes: Here is some fine poetry from Carolyn Adams. My favorite title might be **Late Leaving**; so I won't quote a single line since I highlighted most of them. But here's a taste for the rest: "The moon is a splinter, / inferring its wholeness." "in heavy garments. / The sun has been absent" "prophets in statuary gold, / saints in beatified stone," "the past is a collection of mirrors," I left some out, maybe there are too many...HS (Spacing is poet's own.)*

## Something Moving

Feel your pulse  
become a memory.  
The ticking clock  
steers toward  
a full quiet.  
You're weightless.

Something moving  
in the kitchen.

You steady the  
vertiginous chair,  
the carousel floor.

Something tugging,  
pulling you  
to the window,  
to the lamp,  
to the rug.

The room doubles,  
then toggles,  
slowly swings into the vertical.

Something moving  
in the attic.  
Something moving  
in your bed.

## **The Glacier Dream**

I'm cold. I realize  
I'm trolling Southern California,  
ice-bound.  
At first I'm alone. Then,  
passersby adhere to the glacier.  
We pick up valets, socialites,  
janitors, a mayor or two.  
Their cars. Parts of their houses.

We pile on designer bags,  
reality stars, costume jewelry.  
We test them for fit,  
tossing aside what we don't want.  
We don't throw them off  
the glacier, though. We can't  
bring ourselves to do that.

We're plundering Disneyland,  
dismantling concessions,  
destroying the integrity  
of the Ferris wheel.  
We add carnival trash  
to our existent burdens.

The sun sets.  
Our vehicle pushes on,  
through streets and celluloid,  
revising as it goes.

## **The Aviator's Valentine**

Plush lines of farms and meadows  
divide the earth below.  
Cemetery towns, their chess games  
of little pawns and squires and kings  
marked for death,  
blue waters snaking  
cities of stacked boxes,  
shimmering streams of light,  
burning refineries--  
all pass under my wing.

Here in veils of blue silk,  
hawks and I argue  
the perils of current and updraft.  
We name the shades of grey  
in cumulus, nimbus.  
We skim the horizon's blush.  
Summer storms sweep us  
through banks of warm rain.  
We are buoyed on the glimmer of stars  
and a quartered moon.

Looking up,  
you may see this vista  
as vast and chartless,  
made of water and the dreams  
of a thousand lost fools.  
But over land and sea, over all,  
I am cruising.  
I am lighter than air.

## **A Modern Death**

In slow motion, freeze-frame,  
I watch you struggle  
in the cocoon of error, time lapse,  
convulsion of need and refusal.  
Injury is inevitable,  
but there should be no fear in this:  
the past is a collection of mirrors,  
the present, water broken by a stone.  
I leave this room  
where a clock echoes  
in the hollow afternoon,

and the scent of rain is the only fresh thing.

Voices in my head recite  
our nameless lives,  
slashed with this blade I wield, this pen.  
You sleep alone in the darkness,  
our story scrawled in couplets  
on the living room wall.

In this age of modern death,  
motivation is not questioned,  
closure is achieved in 60 seconds or less.  
Faith is quickly forgotten,  
ambition, only bright flashes  
on the horizon.  
You will not see me,  
you cannot forgive me.  
But I am told that's the way of love:  
one is always leaving,  
the other is left  
to an unraveling aftermath.  
And we are pursued by a hounding rhythm:  
the tale is no greater with the telling.

## Slope

Her clothes, ragged hair,  
whip the wind like tattered flags.  
The horizon stretches lean and hungry,  
a thin cold line.  
She reaches for the husky beside her.  
She smiles and strokes his thick white fur  
as he hunches, nose to ground.  
This is a hunt well-rehearsed.

She tethers the dog  
to the shopping cart,  
tilts up a brown bottle,  
throws it down empty.  
She steps from the slope  
of the overpass,  
to face the wind  
and the herds of cars.  
Steps to the curb  
with her crayon-scrawled sign.

## **Veladora**

Carry a candle  
in my name  
to your place of prayer,  
cluster it with others  
in supplication.  
In that delicate air  
luminous with incense  
and absolution,  
prophets in statuary gold,  
saints in beatified stone,  
receive your requests for me.  
In your hope, piety's wing  
will buoy  
the pain I carry,  
and I'll emerge,  
take to flight,  
borne on your benevolence.  
Uplifted, almost holy.

## **Late Leaving**

Finally,  
I am leaving you.  
I've left before,  
but you weren't here to notice.  
Absence is your trademark.

I stand at your door,  
scrubbing it clean of every trace  
my knock has left.  
I walk backward  
down your stairs,  
lifting my footprints as I go.

It's long ago  
been time to leave.  
I'm the late one, I guess:  
waiting for the coffee to cool,  
waiting for nightfall,  
waiting for you to beckon my return.

## **Rust**

The rust bells of winter  
toll the days in long numbers

as rain, a dark word  
on stones  
mantles the air

in heavy garments.  
The sun has been absent  
for many paragraphs.  
My solitude  
expands hours

to interminable manuscripts.  
I wonder if persistence  
can summon heat

from its  
abstract origins.  
I wonder if  
evidentiary storms  
can change slight words

to a cogent  
argument.  
I wonder if  
damage truly  
alters

what it falls upon.

## Envisat 1 Observes Us

Tonight I'm thinking  
of Elton's blue canoe,  
that harbinger,  
as I study  
the face of God.

The moon is a splinter,  
inferring its wholeness.  
Planets wear colors  
in complex memory.

I'm only a pin dot of light  
in your eye-sky.  
I measure distances each day,  
gather pointless bulletins.

I see you.  
I see you giving up your good intentions,  
taking me with you.

You migrate a small Earth,  
crawl a finite geometry.

Warfighters move in, move borders,  
explode and run.  
Then, one minute after the hour,  
all guns fall silent.

Breezes move aspen and oak arbitrarily.  
A soft tapping rain  
disturbs you.

Salmon swim upstream  
against the hungry teeth of wilderness,  
through sediment and toxins,  
into the mouth of a volcano.

My obsolete architecture,  
my irrelevance,  
don't distract me.

You give me so much to see

**THE POET SPEAKS:** *I write because I want to understand the complexities of this life -- the relationships between people, objects, and environments. If I can lay out thoughts in poetry, those complexities begin to unravel. Poetry is like raw data that has to undergo the discipline of critical review and revision, so I'm always working on my craft. I've experimented with forms, but I usually return to free verse.*

**AUTHOR'S BIO:** *Carolyn Adams' poetry and art have appeared in Steam Ticket, Aji Magazine, Topology, Change Seven Magazine, and Beatnik Cowboy, among others. She has been nominated for a Pushcart prize, as well as for Best of the Net, and was a finalist for 2013 Poet Laureate of the city of Houston, Texas. She is currently a staff editor for Mojave River Review, and a poetry editor for VoiceCatcher. Having relocated from Houston, she lives in Beaverton, Oregon.*