

F OUR (4) (4) Poems poems poems

By Tonya Suther

WHY I LIKE IT: Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... *Tonya Suther is nothing if not accomplished...She writes through peephole what she calls a "fisheye." Like what she writes, it's 'an ultra wide-angle lens that produces strong visual distortion intended to create a wide panoramic or hemispherical' view of the world. "Who can tell...?" Well she can: "my mouth teeth, eight of them / scattered on the road" "the first responders robbed me / as I lay bloody unresponsive in the gravel" Contrast: "...a smile as wide / as the vinyl moon and stars pasted / on her bedroom walls." "I remember the avocado / countertop, the full ashtray, the empty / Mateus bottle in the trash." Next: "He's awash with grief / and the black beans I served for breakfast." "I refuse to count the pixels on the big screen / or the episodes till that woman / dyes her hair and removes her blouse." I know, so many quotes and so little time, but the imagery is too divine...*

Poems are published per page to maintain author integrity. (Eds.)

Mother

There was your coral lipstick
I borrowed, smudged sparingly
matte in the bathroom mirror,
my mouth teeth, eight of them
scattered on the road
among the shards of glass and unspent
cash, the money I tucked
after lunch in the breast pocket of
my shirt above my midriff
tiny and taut,
the first responders robbed me
as I lay bloody unresponsive in the gravel
(but what is \$90 when you
robbed me of more?), my hair washed
jet black, curled for the first time
You look like a French whore.

Eye Sore

From the door, I can see her walking her dog. Or maybe
the dog's walking her down the mortared path. Who
can tell through a fisheye?

Her legs look limber, but they must ache—
arthritis protruding from her right knee—a
giant egg sac clinging to the stucco
of my front porch. I should take a broom to it,
dislodge this neighborhood
eye sore. I know they talk in circles
around these parts. Curb appeal, rock walls,
no ragweed. Did you not read the covenants?
It's hung there since the rocks were first laid. Actually,
it started to manifest the moment I signed the deed to the house
while you were in Colorado digging up anything evergreen.

Avocado Mornings

From behind the bedroom door, I heard her loud and clear,
as she whispered into the phone. My mother's voice,

boastful, as it ran down the line to greet my father,
who stayed behind. They spoke every night,

during her Winter visit when I tried so hard
to make my house into a home. Their nightly

conversations were sweet, one of those things
that make a child smile, a smile as wide

as the vinyl moon and stars pasted
on her bedroom walls. I can't see her

behind Saturn's rings, but I can smell the
Folgers down the hall. I remember the avocado

countertop, the full ashtray, the empty
Mateus bottle in the trash.

I don't miss those empty mornings waiting for the bus,
but my brother continues to crack jokes

despite the times she's told him he and his boyfriend
are going to hell. *It's always so much work when I come here.*

No Coming Back

I've crossed the meridian and can feel the burning tide.

How long before he tumbles?

He's awash with grief
and the black beans I served for breakfast.

They've stained his breath, and he's choking on the vowels padding his throat.

How long before he pushes back from the table?
Before he changes the channel?

I refuse to count the pixels on the big screen
or the episodes till that woman
dyes her hair and removes her blouse.

"This won't end well for her," he says.

THE POET SPEAKS: *I never plan to write about anything specific and not all of my work is autobiographical. I begin a poem recalling a phrase, thinking about an image, or imagining a situation. I rely on alliteration and assonance to create pace and mood, and the lines come mostly intuitively based on associative sounds and images. I tend to write about feelings of loneliness and loss. These four poems surprised me in their eagerness to vent.*

A UTHOR'S BIO: Tonya Suther is a two-time recipient of the Ruth Scott Academy of American Poetry Prize (2020 & 2021), her very first sonnet can be found in *WestWard Quarterly*, and her very first chapbook is forthcoming from Dancing Girl Press. Currently, she works as a graduate assistant at New Mexico State University, where she teaches Professional and Technical Communication and serves as a coordinator in the English department's Writers in the Schools program. She also interns at Zoeglossia, an organization for poets who identify as disabled.