



## AN OSPREY HAD AN IDEA ONE DAY

BY

RICHARD WEAVER

**WHY I LIKE IT:** *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... "She blinked Hello, for such were her thoughts, and was amazed when he blinked back." Richard Weaver's 'An Osprey had an idea one day' is a fascinating story as told through the eyes of this one outcast bird as he falls in love with an owl and they produce owlsprey offspring. If this is not enough to get your attention, the account unfolds in an almost Attenboroughesque wildlife documentarian style. Of course, I have spoiled it for you, but there are lots of other humorous twists and turns in the telling of this deep-diving, independent-minded winged creature and his freethinking crossbreeding spouse. "Their life lived between desire and design, at the edge of impossible and what can be."--perversity makes strange nest-fellows.*

An Osprey had an idea one day

a thought unlike any previous: it is well enough to soar above with sharp eyes, sharper claws, and deadly beak. But the boredom is immense for someone, something as impatient as myself. Why not change it up? Why not adapt and become free of the sea's treacherous teeth. He remembered an eagle's nest he'd seen, a platform at the edge of a brackish lagoon. Why not commandeer that space? Above ground real estate - a perfect location. And free for the taking. And so he did, rudely evicting the tenants from their perch, who, as luck would have it, had not yet nested. Although he preferred something higher, closer to the clouds, he spent his first days there adapting and adopting improved techniques for launching and plummeting, somehow gathering a greater rate of descent than normal 9.8 meters per second per second. His own law of the conservation of energy. A feather for Galileo. He knew there was no need to figure his splat time ( $1/2 * \text{mass} * \text{velocity}^2 = \text{mass} * g * \text{height}$ ) energy rate since his style was not that of a stubborn pelican. He computed snatch time for surface. A more elegant approach to keeping life and wings together. Eat well he did though. His coloration improved. Never had he been as sleek or alive. Until one day another thought intruded. To wit, there must be more to life than this. Much more to be had. But where. But how. When he knew: it was now. Then he heard a hooooing. A silly owl's gargle. Suddenly Osprey was surrounded by loneliness. But filled with an urgency of purpose. Desire filled his wings as he rose above the water, following a scented trail back to its sound source. Now liberated from doubt, his heart beating hard towards what he knew to be the wind-path meant for his wings alone. To say the least, Ms. Owl was not amused at his approach, did tremble with fear at Osprey's encroachment, itself an unheard of thing in avian etiquette. But circle her he did, thrice, and then land nearby with an unimaginable grace for such a well-endowed specimen. She blinked Hello, for such were her thoughts, and was amazed when he blinked back. A goodly beginning. He proved to be a consummate and considerate companion. Tidy. Picked up the bones after each meal. And a fierce lover as well. Delighted she was later with their brood of owlspreys. Their life lived between desire and design, at the edge of impossible and what can be.

**THE POET SPEAKS:** *This poem is one of many (519 and counting) from a series begun in 2016 after I “rediscovered” Russell Edson’s work after a 40+ year silence. Blame it on*

*Lydia Davis who stated in an interview that she did not learn how to write fiction while*

*Matriculating as the Iowa Writing Program. Edson’s poetry was the clew she followed for her subsequent successes. I chased another rabbit. It was a simple matter to pluck*

*Edson’s from the internet and wait. I took the first to arrive: The Intuitive Journey arrived first, closely followed by The Tunnel. I took both to my neighborhood bar, The James Joyce Pub. Sat in my usual corner chair and waiting for 119.5 seconds to pass while a Imperial pint Guinness was being readied. I always write by hand with a black Uni-ball fine point. I admit to being partial to 100 sheet line yellow legal pads. I flipped open TIJ to an arbitrary point (about 1/3) and faced with a choice – Verso or recto – I opted for the poem on the right. I disremember the title. I only recall reading the first few lines before putting the book down and dashing off 3 unbroken poems. Another flip.*

*More poem glancing. 3 hours pass and as many Stouts. Not a single poem was read completely. But 10 new poems appeared. The next day 8 more. At some point I did finally read Edson’s poems. The reading and the damage done. The process continues. I have The Wounded Breakfast with me now while I listen to Tom Waits (Frank’s wild Years, one of many whose music guides me. I thought about using his lyrics as my response so that I could end with “Never could stand that dog.” Serendipity is a large*

*part of my process. And music. The 1st MS I completed after my emancipation from Academia was a merger of art and music: Pachelbel’s canon with Gigue, and the art*

*of Walter Anderson. 11 years for 57 poems. Worth it though. But not a story for here.*

*I admit to being ekphrastic without shame. I don’t paint. I’m hopeless with stringed*

*instruments or those with holes to blow.*

*I remember reading Langston Hughes’s translation of Gabriela Mistral as a teenager, along with Bukowski, Corso, Ferlinghetti. I was a sponge for SF and Fantasy, but also*

*Haunted the used bookstores of Dallas for Early American Humorous, including those*

*who predated Twain. The Algonquins were especially important: S J Perelman, James Thurber, Robert Benchley, D. Parker. And somehow Milt Gross. Those influences continue. As do my readings in Neruda, James Wright, Jean Giono, Lorca, P. Salinas (I grew up in Texas and suffered 12 years of Spanish with Mr. Ramirez. (I was interested in Esperanto and attempted to teach myself Russian after graduating high school. I also*

*read Webster International dictionary (and made note cards of the words I didn’t know or thought might be useful for poems).*

*Language and literature have also been important to me. The Public Library was a 2nd home as was any school library. My second Masters is in Library Science. I was the only one in my family (brothers and sister) who had a library, who bought LPs, (I owned the stereo) who listened to AM radio afterhours at night (and later shortwave (Radio Brazil!!)). Music and the sounds of words like corazón in Spanish: Heart. (coração in Portuguese). Most recently I just finished listening to all of the audio versions of The Goon Show, Blackadder, and am 43 minutes from completing the 4th and final season of A Bit of Fry and Laurie. Call that Literary? You'd be amazed at the language leaps.*

*In a reconstructed nutshell: many things open up doors to poetry for me – a single word, a phrase, a short story or novel, science, astrophysics, humor, good translations,*

*Guinness. What floats my stylistic boat, and always has, is tone and temper, attitude, and altitude, a Merwin-like awareness of how small words can reshape the world, and a willingness to lay oneself bare, something I rarely achieve. And Lastly, Why Poetry?*

*Why do I continue writing after 57 years in the mangled metaphor of a saddle? Why not.*

*Why ask why? The answers lie in Neruda's The Book of Questions.*

**AUTHOR BIO:** Post-Covid, the author has returned as the writer-in-residence at the James Joyce Pub in Baltimore. Among his other pubs: conjunctions, Abyss & Apex (2022), Southern Quarterly, Free State Review, Hollins Critic, Misfit Magazine, Loch Raven Review, The Avenue, New Orleans Review, & Burningword. He's the author of The Stars Undone (Duende Press, 1992), and wrote the libretto for the symphony, Of Sea and Stars (2005). He was a finalist in the 2019 Dogwood Literary Prize in Poetry. His 200th Prose poem was recently published.