

3 Prose Poems

By

Howie Good

WHY I LIKE IT: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... Howie Good reads with all the splendour of burning incense and smoking grass. Perhaps not scarcely a seasoned taste, well-dried and freshly lit. At long last he's finally legal, dispensed in bulk and pre-rolled cones. Thank god for child-proof packaging, let them get their own. He's a sheer delight, "A delegation of / angels in a tree outside the synagogue hooted in derision and then rose into the sky and flapped / away, leaving mysterious future gaps in the fossil record." . . . "My wife has a / long, thin, smile-shaped scar just above her pubis from a Caesarean. Oh, I think, how beautifully / torn." . . . "The medical assistant asked in a flat, toneless bureaucratic voice how I would describe the pain. / Stabbing? Aching? Sharp? Dull?" If you ever need to go head shopping, Howie's "tongue is all muscle." Who's up for a trip to Canabaskin-Robbins?(Spacing is poet's own.)*

Unsolved Mysteries #2

The unbalanced hostage-taker suddenly meekly surrendered to his hostages. In that instant, I became convinced of the essential stupidity of strictly adhering to any single plan. A delegation of angels in a tree outside the synagogue hooted in derision and then rose into the sky and flapped away, leaving mysterious future gaps in the fossil record. And don't think I didn't know that with my droopy face and drab old clothes I looked like an unassimilable immigrant from a strange country – someplace dark and rainy and governed by contradiction, where there are no clues or, rather, only false ones.

Mariner's Harbor

The gray seagulls at the water's edge watch me with black beady eyes in which I seem to detect glints of sardonic amusement. In the surviving fragment of his book *On Analogy*, Julius Caesar tells us to "Avoid strange and unfamiliar words as a sailor avoids rocks at sea." My wife has a long, thin, smile-shaped scar just above her pubis from a Caesarean. Oh, I think, how beautifully torn.

A Theory of Justice

The medical assistant asked in a flat, toneless bureaucratic voice how I would describe the pain. Stabbing? Aching? Sharp? Dull? She entered my answer on the form, but without showing any actual interest. A philosopher once said – or should have – that a society is only as just as its treatment of its most vulnerable members: the old, the sick, the poor, the institutionalized. Using a dropper, I strategically place .50 milliliters of Triple M tincture under my tongue. I wait fifteen, twenty minutes, and then gray-clad troops burst from the treeline with a rebel yell. The tongue is all muscle.

THE POETS SPEAKS: *Prose poetry is seen in many literary venues as a poor excuse for poetry. This makes it more, not less, attractive to someone with my distrust of hierarchies. Prose poetry occupies a liminal space between prose and poetry, which means it is unbound by prescriptive definitions of either. Consequently, every prose poem is an experiment, a kind of dare, a challenge to see new things or see old things in new ways.*

AUTHOR BIO: Howie Good is the author of *Failed Haiku*, a poetry collection that is the co-winner of the 2021 Grey Book Press Chapbook Contest and scheduled for publication in summer 2022. His story **4 x 100** was first published in **Issue 2**.