

Five

By

Patrick Cahill

WHY I LIKE IT: Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...

Patrick Cahill's poetry is delectable in 'π,' "Mosquito island / aromas and bites / on Spider river / lick me / you said / but slowly / lap me up . . . near the used literature / π's timeless flow." 'Dream Catcher' "I thought that you could find us in the dark, our rabbit-skin hats against the frost. We did place the idols upright in a doorway. And hid in our nakedness, white among the leaves." As PC weaves his "spun contrivances" in 'Espresso at Noon,' "He outlines the space his body fills in the shifting air, . . . she touches the outline containing an impression of him, . . . her voice a tremolo of sounds." And 'Fevered nests' "of anticipation . . . its restless soughing . . . the earth imprinting its damaged orders . . . figures flickering at the edge of perception . . . your rumored lives" Lastly, 'Ashes,' "A drifter's appaloosa swims upstream, passed the confinement of the mentally fraught, . . . the wind blowing inside a clock, . . . the hook that pulls him under." Einstein, man of Science, and former postal worker, said, "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious" Cahill, man of Letters, unlocks them. Albert was also clever enough to croak, "Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world....blah, blah blah." Cloak yourself in Cahill's stimulating prose, giving birth to convolution. Take leave of my fool's paraphrase, and wrap yourself in Patrick's awe.

(To maintain poet's spacing each poem is on its own page. Please scroll down) HS

π

Mosquito island
aromas and bites
on Spider river

lick me
you said
but slowly
lap me up

pick the pickup
up here

I want to be a pickup
picked up

near the used literature
 π 's timeless flow

the island
spiders frozen
the river's thin
surface iced

Dream Catcher

I thought that you could find us in the dark, our rabbit-skin hats against the frost. We did place the idols upright in a doorway. And hid in our nakedness, white among the leaves. Maybe we were mistaken for an illusion, our voice left in the spectacle. So dark once I almost swallowed a spider, confused and scratching the surface in a cup of water. Would it have spun contrivances in the soul? The dream catcher brought us here, and we were full of anticipation. But you uttered the curse and then some apparition murdered its double. The elixir it sought concealed in the blood. The vapors we've thought into imagery! Brown helicopters flying in tandem—large insects moving across the sky—

Espresso at Noon

He outlines the space his body fills in the shifting air, she faces him across the table, her chair resting on the yellow umbrella's fallen shade, a manhole cover sheds its microscopic splinters into the breeze above the street, she touches the outline containing an impression of him, a stranger's now though one she's almost imagined, he looks into the air's invisible substance, smudging the words that now and then escape his throat, her voice a tremolo of sounds as though she has begun to sing—a mirror in the woods, those wind chimes—

Fevered nests

of anticipation under the white avalanche its restless soughing
 before it assumes its inevitable theatrical form and moves you
enter between the pylons of frozen air a rattled voice spilling its
nonsense sentences now mist above the snow these also their
 inevitable form the earth imprinting its damaged orders across
the captured sky figures flickering at the edge of perception
 vanished when you turn to inhabit them or vanquish them
their inevitable lies your rumored lives

Ashes

A drifter's appaloosa swims upstream, past the confinement of the mentally fraught, whose ashes dust the interiors of rusted metal boxes, cubes arranged beside the abandoned asylum, where skulls were often made of glass, their empty eyes holding a reflection of empty rooms, passes a green strip, a fence and furrowed field, the wind blowing inside a clock, as flies bite the appaloosa's emerging coat leaving the stream, a minor event among the reeds, just beyond the margins of our perception, the drifter a thief who couldn't know when he would finally take the hook that pulls him under.*

THE POET SPEAKS: *How do I begin a poem? Almost anything can trigger those first words, that initial line—an object that catches my eye, a song, a musical cadence, a dream (though usually not its literal translation), a dance movement, a work of art, the sound of a phrase, a poem or piece of fiction that makes me want to sit down and write on the spot.*

Once begun, I let my imagination take over with as little editing as possible; that comes later. At times this leads to a kind of narrative, as with these poems, at others to a verbal collage, parts assembled in some intuitive way that seems to make sense.

A lifetime of reading, listening, and writing have given me a style. An exhaustive list of authors, artists, and musicians would go on and on. A few of the many writers I've cherished: James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Arthur Rimbaud, Emily Dickinson, Federico García Lorca, W.S. Merwin, Pierre Reverdy, Denise Levertov, Marilynne Robinson, Donald Barthelme, Carolyn Forché...so many left out.

Poetry opens up the world for us, a world in which we experience strange landscapes, and see others and ourselves in new ways, under the skin of reality, beyond the news.

AUTHOR BIO: Patrick Cahill's poetry collection, *The Machinery of Sleep*, was published by Sixteen Rivers Press in 2020. His prose and poems have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies, including *Volt*, *Aji*, *great weather for Media* anthologies, *Into the Void* (Ireland), *Eclectica*, *Hole in the Head*, *Subprimal*, and *Permafrost*, among others. His poems have twice won the Central Coast Writers Award. He is a cofounder and editor of the former *Ambush Review*, a San Francisco-based literary and arts journal.

* Art work by David Maisel provided the image of the boxes and their contents.