

# THREE POEMS

ANSIE BAIRD



# **T H R E E P O E M S**

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The Poetry Collection is proud to celebrate National Poetry Month with this publication of Ansie Baird's *Three Poems*, the second of a yearly series featuring the work of poets living in Buffalo.

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## ALWAYS THE EVERLASTING FRAGRANCE

Now I will try to write a poem  
which includes the word wisteria.  
I do not picture it blooming or  
bending in the wind, nor am I  
able to imagine its elegant scent.  
It is merely the word wisteria,  
perhaps violet or palest purple  
and fragile, clinging to bleached  
wooden pickets in the garden—  
although I do not know whether  
wisteria clings. It sounds like  
whistle or whisper or wrist and,  
shyest of all the words, wistful  
in its perfect loveliness, so  
I shall begin tonight to write a  
short poem about wisteria.

## GROUND PLAN

Hawks rise. Not ourselves.  
Earthbound, we hike the murky trail,  
Struggle past low-hanging limbs  
Disappearing downwind.  
Stumble. Scramble. Persevere.  
Clots of mud sully our boots but  
Tunes rise like secrets from trees.  
They lead us past bogs.  
They comfort us.  
We sleep beside small streams  
Encountered by chance.  
Daybreak moves us through  
Morning, heavy with light.  
This is the way to do it.  
Undeterred, we lean toward each other.  
Not airborne. Not birds.

## **ROUSED FROM SLEEP, YOU HEAR**

Sometimes at dawn in this big old house,  
when you're barely awake, you hear  
the sound of your front door closing  
behind someone leaving and you think:  
There goes the house ghost, the one who  
dozes in the black chair in the back room,  
steps in the dog's water bowl,  
drinks another inch or two of the Glenlivet,  
rearranges all the papers on your messy desk.  
Sometimes a high note on the upright  
piano resonates in the front hall among  
the scattered hats and hockey sticks.  
There's a familiar scent about him, some kind of  
after-shave or maybe just the outdoors coming in.  
It rouses you from sleep but comforts you,  
alone as you are now in this large house  
once filled with raucous voices in the dark,  
a clarinet behind a bedroom door,  
the faucet running in the flowered bathroom,  
a whistle from the attic. Well, someone  
still comes to call, unasked.  
This phantom almost seems at home,  
as if he never left, although he has.

## About Ansie Baird

Ansie Baird holds degrees from Vassar College and the University at Buffalo, where she received her MA in English and continued the legacy of her father, Oscar A. Silverman, who first joined the English department faculty in 1926 and later served as the director of the University Libraries (1960-68). She is Poet in Residence and a part-time English teacher at The Buffalo Seminary, a non-sectarian secondary school in Buffalo, where she has taught for the past thirty-one years. An editor for *Earth's Daughters* literary magazine, she has also taught for Just Buffalo Literary Center in their Writers in Education program, conducting workshops in elementary, middle, and high schools in the Buffalo area, and was an original member of the Albright-Knox collaborative docent program entitled A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words. Her work has been published in *The Paris Review*, *Western Humanities Review*, *The Southern Review*, *The Denver Quarterly*, *Poetry Northwest*, *The South Dakota Review*, *The Quarterly*, *The Recorder*, *Earth's Daughters*, and other journals. In 2008, her book *In Advance of All Parting* won the White Pine Press 14<sup>th</sup> annual poetry competition and was published by White Pine in August of 2009.

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