Three Poems

Ansie Baird

Three Poems

Ansie Baird

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.

Cover image: "Tree Trunk" by Catherine Parker, © 2010.

© 2010 Ansie Baird

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 14th annual poetry competition and was published by White Pine in August of 2009.

Published in an edition of 300 copies,
of which the first 50 have been numbered and signed by
the poet.

The Poetry Collection
Buffalo, NY | 2010
library.buffalo.edu/pl

University at Buffalo *The State University of New York*