

Out There For A Whole Different Reason

So much goes on in the backwaters,
no view or solid foundation to build: the fishing?
Low-grade throwbacks if you're lucky.
Minnows in schools flit under the half-mirror,
switchblade length flashes like thrown coins.
Quiet chimes jangled through the muck and mote
instant how ideas come in showers and blink out.

A flourish on the tired beat of water-lips on tin.
The net piled aft loses menace in the humid dusk
becoming useless before it has to. There's no call
for bait anyway—why kill to pass the time,
take more than there's reason? House outlines dampen,
gray and several breezes show the light underside
of reed in sweeps and a refrain seems to grow.

Gulls skid around overhead squawk sermons for alms
blunt artless birds who scavenge whatever rot's left:
somehow closer to death than the dead even.
What all is there to know past impulse anyway?
A heron ramps down feathers spread as a jagged maw,
slips his stilts in noiseless, prowls with a beak
drawn sharp and poised, a blade colored to match water.

Joshua Tree

I saw cold dawn over threshold desert peaks.
It was not rose colored birthed glorious

day. Just a dry charmed orange slice
juiced out into the sky. My cigarette lifted
blue smoke and soon-disappeared blue ash

flowers dropped. They eroded, crumpled
from the breeze, flea pieced away again.

When moment folded into gone time
whisked away like I was, a piece atomized
to the world, to walk around, to lose all offerings.

Climbed a mountain stone heaped
stone, stung nettles, dust. It was not a triumphant
battle. I just walked right up, foot over foot,

wrote this poem. I did not smith words like
fire iron and sword, just wrote them in ink

in hope you'd find them. So when I left you
asleep at the campsite, in some time
there'd be a guess that pulled at us both.

—*Jacob Martin*