

In Truth

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Hawks at Pre-Dawn in New Jersey

Nine hawks dance over the Northern Parkway strip
just off exit 105.

Lit by the two crooked
candles of the waning half-moon
and the sun mounting over the ocean,
they glide, soft as owls,
certain as top ten ice dancers
cavorting on a rink in Manasquan.

Ragusa, Sicily

Always the children rushing like small sparrows,
their little bruises needing care
from older sisters or grandmothers.
Play never stopped with their quick tears—
bread munched in the breakaway at tag,
a hurried drink at the public fountain before hide and seek,
or while players were being chosen for a soccer game.
And always the church bells like comforting songs—
night and day, night and day,
louder and sharper on the holidays,
or on the day of the dead when widows,
rosaries wrapped around their wrists like chains,
wailed like witches.

The Dead Speak

Bones now frozen
in this clay
were supple once
with marrow;
blood leaped from brain
to fingertips.

We looked at stars
and knew a presence
in their fire,
felt it settling
in our core.

We fought with lovers
for a sigh.

Hearing loss
in the moan of church bells,
we rushed to hug our children.
The lilac and the daffodil
grew for us
like small heavens;
leaves fell,
eager to enact a story.

Deer traced our woods,
and squirrels nestled in our pines.

Dawn sang to us
in colors and in light,
sang to us easily
in the flight of sparrows
and in the symphony
of turtledoves
and starlings.

A Mid-March Love Poem

Three days into March, I heard
my first dawn bird,
and trees and grass—
that had kept the faith
through a winter of ice
that cracked willow and starfish—
took a deep breath
and easily shook loose their
tightness.

And now the forsythia
resettles its yellow hair,

the hyacinth rises
on green tongues,

the oak branch swells
with rust-colored pearls,

and two redbreasts that sing
even in the noonday
are building a nest
on the lowest branch
of a blue fir.

Agamemnon, Notes from Hades

The embarrassment wasn't in the death,
not the red carpet, the net, not being slaughtered
by that bitch and that boyfriend of hers. (What's his name?)
After all, lions fall to weak hunters.
The little things haunt me: she drooled in her anger;
crossed her eyes in the love bed;
sucked my nipples as if I were her mother.
The guy's face was girlish.
Listen, those two children of mine getting caught in the myth
was worth my having died.