



FERIA

four sonnets and a song by **ZACHARY BOS**

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epilogue: *song*

SPRING

May Maternelle

“the grazing of love” – Everson

O these days of lying in the laurel,
you dozing while I watch the shadows spot
your rising falling flanks with dappled dark.
How long will this un hunted closeness last?
Will you always follow when I beckon,
always still yourself when I bid you hide?
Will you always nuzzle my neck, pebbled
as it is with hooked seeds and the soft buds
of feeding ticks? O, my fletched muzzle,
mottled red after a meal of nettles...
Wake now, little milk-hungry one, wobbly
on your unsteady legs. Come lift your nose
to my white belly. Drink until you feel
drowsy & fruit-plump. Now, down, sleep again.

SUMMER

Jenny Haniver

on Martha's Vineyard in August

The herring gull foraging the tideline
froze. Plucked a crab from the water. Dropped it.
Stopped it darting away sideways, using
a clawed foot to hold her in place. Rolled it
belly-up, then dipped his hooked beak over
and over into the green brown bronze bowl
of the convulsing creature, eating with
appreciative rabbeting movements.
Released the empty shell; flew off. I watched
from the restaurant deck, where we reposed
eating steamers and drinking tea. (Chilmark
was still a dry town.) In the surf, small waves
in white capes rocked a skate carcass, her wounds
loosely opening and closing like mouths.

AUTUMN

Orchard

at Old Frog Pond Farm in November

Late fruit fallen off the boughs lies hidden
among the vines of creeping vetch and blades
of yellow nutsedge, bruised & ruptured. Where
the furred skins have split open, mauve hornets
swarm the gold dragees of nectar. A grey
gilt of mildew coats the wet honeycrust
of decay; silver dew dries on small webs.
The hungry black-haired bees, hastened
by fear, visit and revisit the last flowers
to hector and harrow, gleaning sweetness.
The summer moths knit themselves into tight
bark crevices, pleat their wings, ease into
dormancy. The bees shiver on their combs,
measuring their stores, murmuring moris.

WINTER

Stereotypy

at the Aquarium du Québec in February

In their tanks the silver-scaled fish are turned
to face the artificial current head-
first. The piped air stinks of bleach. The maudlin
pity I feel for prisoners bobs up,
outweighing by my disapproval of un-
managed nature. (There is blood on her breath.)
In the feature exhibit, a polar
bear paces back and forth across his pen.
The high wall around his home is painted
cliff-black below, sky-blue above. From time
to time, he slips into the green water
and elegantly smears his white belly
on the glass, carving streaks in the algae.
Blue flakes off the wall: the fake sky falling.

EPILOGUE

Fugolsang

(i)

The wind of air makes glass,
makes earth and empty sky a mesh.
Its unmade voice though speechless speaks
and layers ash across the snow.

Summer is forgotten—
spring and winter, autumn, autumn.
Our lives are small. Our dreaming brief.

The seasons care not for our grief.

The sun sings for the earth—
sings glass and flesh and wild rose,
unwritten songs of shapeless speech
which murmur all the names of worth.
Choose what you will: swallow
blackmilk, swallow silence, sing out;

still all creation groans with doubt.

Still that thunder of trampling mares
as stars against the sea
will beat against mortality.
Too much of what could be is not—
the six-shot pistol, the bloody
too-ripe bicameral heart.

What is the wind? A hollow thing,
a bright migraine of snow. It kills
birds, implies absence, ubi sunt.

The heart grows soft with rot,
its inmost chambers swollen first.
Wind, can you hear its beating song?
A cadence of flies on carrion.

(ii)

What tells that it is time
to praise the transitory? White
frost-ferns on the fleche this morning
and choruses of mobbing crows
crying *hunger, hunger*,
from stations in the empty oaks.
The wind rolls handfuls of twig and

acorn and desiccated leaf
 across the browning grass,
seeking fortune in the pattern.
Wild geese fearing the greater
infortune rise and wheel away.
Pullulating starlings shimmer
in their dances of protection.

The constant season urges flight
in changing angles of the light,
 and asks us to forget
the burial of redemption
and regret, the migration of
song from north to south; the sparrows
clinging to barren vines;

the coiled snake in the fieldstone wall,
frozen; an unmigrating owl
crowning the winter pine. Alone
 among our unread books
we watch the turning of the year
for something lost, or almost here,
the calendar's false symmetries.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zachary Bos is an alumnus of the poetry workshops at the Boston University graduate creative writing program, editor of *New England Review of Books*, and publisher of Pen & Anvil Press. He has taught poetry reading and writing workshops in collegiate, community, and prison settings for more than a decade. His writing has appeared in publications including *Berfois*, *Eyewear*, *Fulcrum*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Elsewhere*, *Public Pool*, and *Istok*. He can be found on Twitter, Facebook, Gmail and Instagram as @zakbos. He lives with his wife and pets in Central Massachusetts, and works at Boston University.

*“What is the wind? A hollow thing,
a bright migraine of snow.”*

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