

Three Poems

by Casie Dodd

Our Lady of the Ozarks

Mary surprises where the byways wind
Along the Boston Mountains in the blind.
Such things are new to me. I don't know how
To act as I drive by: a cross? A bow?
Across from Sky-View Lodge, she gazes long
Past grassy trails of tears and war gone wrong.

I thought I saw old Pound a few miles back;
He'd given up his front of pure attack.
He drove a tractor, bent beneath the crows,
Away from shrines and anything that glows.
It seems he'd given up the ancient arts
To see why his friend Bill preferred red carts.

I tried to stop and say, "You saved me, Ez—
Like how that canto with the grass blade says."
But then, he just pretended not to hear
And let the wind speak as he paused mid-gear.
His denim shirt revealed a weathered chest;
He muttered low, "Oh let an old man rest."

One has to ask sometimes, in thrusts of pain:
When will the world take up its course again?
Still stands Our Lady—beauty at what cost?
Ceramic ash: one touch, and all is lost.

Three Sisters *after Cisneros*

Mangoes never grow in Bella Vista.
That place where caves crack down
the middle for highway loops
is where they settled down for good.

Katherine wagged a finger.
Marie blinked in code.
June was always smiling.

They knew, they knew:
life becomes a circle.
Then they left.

Now I want them, more than ever,
to hold me all at once—once more—
before they send me out the back

door into that little forest
in the middle of a cul-de-sac,
running 'round in lazy
eights all day before
my uncle calls me home.

A True Grit Sonnet

She never meant to end up at the Fort.
It left her feeling cold and lifeless there.
But love and thirst for vengeance drew her where
Her father lost his life in idle sport.
She was too young to grasp the last resort
That those who live in desperation dare
To take upon themselves—a gasp for air
Before the stifling grip of Parker’s court.

So when she stood near Belle Point, fresh with grief,
And watched the gallows holding tight its breath,
She didn’t know where to direct her eyes
Until they caught the edge of a belief
In something not quite permanent as death
But no less true than her faith could devise.

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