

estuary

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For Boppy

REEVES, Ray Otis - New Ross, Lunenburg County 1918-1999

"He was best known for his love of fishing, playing cards and peppermints. Known affectionately as "Boppy," he enjoyed his time with his 13 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren."

10 years old
drawing of me and him
 small and big
with fishing poles in hand
and a border
of buttercups - a brilliant yellow
taped on

Held it tight in hands wet
wet with warm weeping
tears fresh as buttercups
my morning dew

Wait outside
led in - before the rest
I asked if I could

Inside
peering over the long dark wooden box
looks like he's sleeping
I like to think he was dreaming
souvenirs and keepsakes
deck of cards and peppermints and
now
my drawing
placed on his hand
rested there

He was laid to rest

Led out by my father's hand
my source of comfort

Buttercups
his source of comfort, one bright thing
for him
underground

~ Katie Broome

Lay Down the Lilies

Pass me the buttercup,
let's drink from the bluebottle.

Slam on the hawthorn,
the dandelions slain.

Let's lay down the lilies.

Bellflowers ring
and dragon-plant burn.

Turn to your ash,
fill up the fern.

Bellflowers ring
and dragon-plant burn.

~ *Jesse Malone*

For the Love of Lawns

I saw a crow on the lawn today.

Black and green black and yellow black and
in the car speeding faster and faster
angular bones, pink red flesh and feathers scatter
on silent black wings.

Not likely, but reality stares
with beady eyes
bugs splatter on the windshield
and lightning strikes

from up and down.

Black
and
yellow

turn
ahead

black
and yellow
death
ahead.

So browned and bruised
the apple of life.

The wheels turn and I'm suffocating
and with each mile another hope dies
two dark talons

clasp my neck
I try to try to try
to loosen the grip -

escape the black

but the sun's light blinds my eyes.

There's a hole in the world today
my mind's in the sky

there's a hole in my mind today...

the world is pushed to the bottom
of the handbag

lipstick and key-chains
crowd the cold
to the very bottom
and lost in a blade
of grass

my world

I try to try to try to try to try

but I can't.

I saw a crow on the lawn today.
I heard it scream.

If a crow is a man
talons for hands beaks

for knives

then my life is a feather

the crow flaps back to dark.

~ *Emily Beveridge*

The Forest

Come out
and I'll show you
my neck of the woods.

With clothes shed
let me slip through your reeds
and slide down your banks.

Midnight-green scratches,
her grass grabbed feet.
Eyes exploding in a riot of stars.

We both know you're beautiful.
But where do I stand?
Lost in this bramble. This thicket of men.

~ *Carey Bray*

Ochi

We lined up along the wharf's railing, each consumed in their own individual shadowy grief. The dikes expanded before us, the slick mud shining in the muted lights from the night sky and the town sleeping behind us. Despite it being June, the night air was cold and damp upon my skin, the wind drove the dampness down to the bone. I inhaled the salty air deep into my lungs, trying to center myself. I was glad the tide was out so he would not be lost to the swirling black depths again just yet. The ashes were a leaden weight in my hand. Their silky powder slowly sifting through the cracks of my fingers, trying to escape on the wind. I had never held someone's remains before. I had never encountered death before, at least not since I was too young to understand its significance. How could a young man of 6'4" and over 200 pounds be reduced to a 6 pound pile of soot? All his cells, muscles, tissues, bones, organs ... everything that made Ochi, Ochi, was now just ... dust. My hands started to sweat and I could feel him clinging to my dampened palms. I had no words, only phantom emotions which refused to be fully realized. I opened my hand and watched as he drifted toward the rusty mud of the bay. I looked at my hand, examining the white cracks of ash spread across my palm. No matter how much I rubbed away at them afterward, the tiny creases remained.

~ *Emily Clark*

Axiom

Thrown carelessly upon the ground lay what the child perceived to be mere pieces of paper with no extraordinary worth or value. He delighted in effortlessly ceasing to maintain control over his grasp on these delicate scraps as they fell to the ground and was little concerned, if at all, with the untidy state of the room.

The master, known to be a man of startlingly honest nature, regarded the discarded pieces of paper with a countenance of pure calmness. He said nothing, that is, no words were emitted from his lips. His eyes communicated his contemplation and concern. Kneeling, he picked up one piece of paper that had been weakly crumpled in the small hands of the child and did nothing; rather, by the critical standards of the expectant, he did nothing.

Without trying to beckon him forth, the master had intrigued the child (who was a moment ago oblivious to the apparent interesting nature of his previous deeds) in such a way that he shyly approached the man.

He stared at the plain article in the master's hand with a sense of desire and impulsively reached for it. The master did not object, nor did he start. His eyes were but the only source of movement. The child inspected the dull paper and after assuring himself that it was, as he had originally acknowledged, of no great interest to him, he gently placed it back into the hands of the master.

Peering directly into the boy's eyes without verbalizing his intent, the boy comprehended the man's plea. Obediently he stared at the paper in the man's hands. The aged fingers began to make folds and creases in the wrinkled paper and as time passed, the paper no longer took the same form as it once did.

He handed the transformed paper to the boy once again, saying, "It is not for you to decide what is beauty. The paper crane was once only just ordinary. Now you see it in a different form, but always know that never did it lose its worth."

~ *Rose Grieder*

Shifting

One year ago, I was sitting in a room in a building across the street from where I currently sit, looking out the window and wondering what life was like for people in this building. I had wild thoughts: perhaps residence life is completely different from house to house, perhaps the girl on the other side of that curtain is naked, perhaps the smoke coming from that window is from a fire (though I quickly realized that it was merely marijuana and was disappointed that there would be no engaging real-life drama that evening). Alas, moving in to the building that for two years presented a certain air of mystery completely shattered the illusion. This house is the exact same as the last one: the frosh are just as nervous, the laundry machines are just as fickle, and the girls are just as clothed.

~ *Kiel Fredrickson*

Dynasty

All dynasties begin somewhere. Ours begins in the kitchen.

I was to learn this at an early age. I was eight, bespectacled and in love with stories. If I close my eyes - like I'm doing now - I can recall the most unusual one.

"Sit on my lap, Mei," my Poh-Poh had once said to me on a rainy spring morning, "and let me tell you a story."

I curl into her lap, bury my face in her cardigan. It tickles my chin and makes my eyes water. A strong wind pushes against the old house, making her walls expand, contract. Creak and groan. I wonder how long she can continue to brave the weather.

Poh-Poh senses my fear. She brings a wrinkly hand to my own and holds it tight. I feel the veins and the skin - soft, loose, and warm. "I'm here," her hands tell me.

Then Poh-Poh begins her tale: "My own Poh-Poh was not much to look at. She had large, crooked teeth and coarse hair, much like your own. She was only twelve when she had to live for herself, as a servant to a fat, rich man in the countryside. He mostly left her alone, and she did her job well. Cleaning and washing. Day and night, just cleaning and washing. Until one day, the rich man's wife died."

At this, I release my face from the cardigan and look into Poh-Poh's eyes. *People don't die in stories*, I think to myself, and I point this out to her.

"In fairytales, perhaps," Poh-Poh says simply, "but this is no fairytale."

I don't want to hear this story anymore. But I keep quiet and close my eyes, waiting for Prince Charming's arrival.

"Once his wife died, the rich man was sad, but he was also hungry. Who was there to cook for him? No one but the little servant girl." Poh-Poh stops. Cough, cough, cough. The phlegmy kind.

She resumes: "My Poh-Poh was asked to cook his meals, and she did. But she was death in the kitchen. Her rice was too watery, her chicken too mild, and her dumplings too salty.

"The rich man - like all men with empty bellies - was angry. He threatened to release my Poh-Poh out on to the streets. And she cried. The sound of her crying awoke a tiger. She came into my Poh-Poh's room, bearing treasures, and told her to stop crying. 'Use these chives,' she instructed her, 'and make dumplings.' And so she did. And things were good."

My eyelids were heavy and I let them close. Poh-Poh pinches my nose. Not wanting to hurt her feelings, I give her a sleepy smile. I let her continue.

"Her dumplings became a legend in Guangdong province, and the rich, fat man paraded her to all of China, letting everyone know that it was he who had discovered her. But it was not the taste of her dumplings that made them celebrated - though they tasted quite good. No, it was the fortune they brought. Men and women who ate the dumplings became rich like emperors. Poor families moved out of their slums. Fathers could give better dowries. Children were happy. Prosperity rained. China was saved, and its hero was a kitchen-girl with large, crooked teeth."

"That's a very good story," I say, closing my eyes.

"And nearly eighty years later," Poh-Poh continues, "her *chuan cheng*, her legacy, goes on. The women of our family have always worked in the kitchen. Dumplings are in our blood. They're who we are."

The rain prattles on, drumming its fingers on the glass. I open my eyes. "Wait! You lied, Poh-Poh! Talking tigers and magic dumplings? You said there was no magic."

"I said this wasn't a fairytale," Poh-Poh corrects me. "That's not to say there is no magic."

The Penny

Gladys

Gladys wanted to go to the new picture theatre in town and she saved up just about as much money as she needed to see John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* on the big screen. A ticket from the window cost fifteen cents. She could do without trying the Red Hots and buttered popcorn this time. It was the picture she wanted to see, especially the handsome face of Henry Fonda. But she only had fourteen cents to her name, earned from hard work delivering her hen's eggs to neighbours half a mile away, and saved up from Christmas and her last birthday. She had only two hours now to pluck up the courage and ask Daddy Jack for that last penny. "No lil' girl, I don't have a penny to spare. But I'll tell ya wha', if ya find one in the house it's yers," he told her. Gladys upturned every cushion and pillow in the house, took out every utensil in the kitchen drawers. She walked the mile into town to search the streets in case she could benefit from another's loss. She never found the penny and never went to a picture theatre, but she did move to California with her husband when she was nineteen, pregnant, and in search of a better life.

Jack

Jack worked hard to earn the little money he received for fishing and working on the docks. He woke up every morning at four to make sure the nets and lobster pots were ready and that the trawler was in top form. When he heard that the new picture theatre was being built up town he thought it was only good for those who could afford it. He knew his daughter would want to go. Gladys had big dreams and big ideas - big ideas that didn't fit in their small fishing town. She had gone to school and learned to read and write when he, at her age, had already quit school five years before to become a fisherman. It wouldn't be long now and she would be off marrying some lad from down shore with striped suits and cuff links. When she asked him for a penny to go to the show, he pictured her smoking Marlboros in a poodle skirt like those women he saw on the covers of magazines he glanced at in the general store. No, he said, but if she found one in the house it was hers. They both knew he kept the family's money in his pocket or the bank. She never went to the picture show, but she did move away to California with a man who worked for the telephone company and chose to smoke Pall Malls in her own Ford Anglia.

~ Rebecca Dobson

Perseverance

~ Chelsea Ryan



Untitled

~Melissa Kelly



Untitled

~ Melissa Kelly



Untitled

~ Katie Zruno



Beauty in the Night Life

~ Kellie Shillington



Untitled

~ Nicole Lyons



December's Dog

~ Carey Bray

