

BREN SIMMERS
NIGHT GEARS



Wolsak & Wynn

Caught

Each morning caught
between blind
and window, bluebottle reverb –
their fat fragile bodies,
stained glass wings:
notes fallen from a score.

Tiny creature whose leg
still quivers.
I haven't had
breakfast and already
this botched job of killing.

Cottonwoods

On the porch, we lean
into the street's new palette,
a canopy of gold

lanterns, latent colour stirring
under green. Low angle sun ignites
branch tips, your eyelashes. Evening

approaches like a timid suitor.
We shiver and stall, watch night
turn on the houses one by one.

Road Work

Dump trucks lumber up the street, shrug dirt
from their humped backs. Workers
in reflective orange spacesuits
emerge from underground bunkers
to lunch in the loose gravel, slo-pitch
coffee cups and wrappers into the gutter.
Traffic forced through a slalom
of pylons and signs *No stopping*,
Detour; sewer pipes' cement lengths
lie shrink-wrapped and bundled
on the sidewalk, dormant. I walk home
past giant egg cups: cement mixers, remnants
of the day's work crusting their edges.
Stumps nested in sawdust. Choked bark
of each remaining oak. What roots
are left among the labyrinth of pipes and cement,
which we once took for solid earth.

Drift

Ankle-deep, the dog quivers for a stick bobbing just
out of reach, but we tell her *stay* and *leave it*.
Don't want wet car seats so we toss
to the beach's outfield, wreckage of second growth logs.
After a record slog of rain, February sun
makes vacationers of us. We admire each
speckled oval at our feet asking
to be palmed, pocketed. Driftwood
figures emerge from knotholes: a cattle skull,
a seal's head, each shape mouthed by canine jaws
seconds after we lay it down.
No critics here to say what is
and isn't art – save ourselves.
Hair in our eyes, sand-hijacked cuffs, we give in to
impulse, huck a few choice heavyweights
into the salt, cry out – too late – when
our dog goes barrelling after them into the surf.
Whoop and holler like six-year-olds
at the splash, the backlash of tide,
thinking for a second our toss caused it.
Her body a slick question mark
we answer with another stick.

Night Gears

Still, haunting creature,
 its silver-tipped
withers, last remnant of a winter coat,

listening at the edge of the road,
 bone antennae
tuned, a thousand pounds

on stilt legs like piles in a wharf,
 mouthing bugs from fur,
eyes half-locked.

Hooves imprint mud,
 waxing and waning crescents,
as evening goes about its absolutions.

Oiling the tall grass, the car
 as it slows. Each joint
anointed as I lean out the window.

The night gears made visible
 if only for a moment.
A small hap I linger in

before driving on.