



Michael Estabrook

baby elephant

Little pine tree off in the gloaming
looks like a little person, a dwarf maybe or an elf,
while a bumpy, gnarled tree root appears
to be a skunk, and then over on the side
of the path is a rock that looks
so much like a baby elephant I stop and stare.
I suppose I should have worn my glasses,
but sometimes for a little while at least,
it seems better to see things as they aren't.

“Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte”

Nervously waiting at the color printer
for copies of the presentation slides to print out,
272 pages, an entire day
of lectures and I'm late for the stupid meeting
and my boss will be annoyed
(I'm never fast enough nor accurate enough
nor thorough enough for Mr. Perfect.)
and I'll walk into the room late,
trudging all this paper
and everyone will stop what they're doing
and saying and writing and stare at me.
But what can I do?
The color printer is printing as fast as it can.
I simply must wait and be late and embarrassed.
Then I notice through the window
the sun is shining, birds are in the trees,
regal as sentries guarding the city gates,
and the grass is such a pretty luminescent green
like in Georges Seurat's 1886 painting –
“Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte.”
Suddenly it hits me
like hot blast from a speeding train
that long after this stupid useless day is done
the sun will still be shining, the birds
will still be guarding the trees, and the grass
will still be such a pretty luminescent green.

FOUND POEM

Note from Dave, left on our kitchen counter:

Mom & Dad,
Thank you so
much for watching Max!
Mom, looks like you have
2 ropes now.
love,
Your Son
(I put the night stand in the kid's room)

Topless In Mexico

At first it didn't bother me. In fact, it seemed kind of funny. "You should've seen us Honey, a sight to behold. All 12 of us middle-aged women sitting on beach chairs all in a row – topless!" What? Topless? "I don't know who started it, Melinda probably, you know her, as a joke. It is legal on some beaches down in Mexico, oh you should've seen it, it was a sight to behold." I can only imagine, I'm laughing and shaking my head. "I didn't tell you for the longest time because I thought you might be upset. You aren't upset are you?" This conversation was a week ago and I was not upset at the time, but now, after it has all settled in, it is bothering me a little, like a smeared footprint etched in new cement. It is not bothering me intellectually, I mean, no big deal really, no harm done, truly a sight to behold, a dozen middle-aged, mostly out-of-shape, saggy women all sitting in a row on a beach in Cancun, their white breasts reflecting the white glare of the tropical sun, a man or two standing off to the side, mouths agape. "Probably the fastest way to clear the beach," I joked. But inside, deep in the soft, hallowed interior of my romantic soul, I winced and caught my breath. There she was, my very own beauty, the love of my life, the virginous little girl I married so many years ago, who once confessed to her priest that we French kissed, sitting topless on some fucking beach in Mexico. "No, of course I'm not upset. Why ever would I be upset about something so silly."

I threw my socks

I was so mad (I forget what about)
that when I got home and began
undressing I took off
my socks and threw them,
not at anyone,
simply threw them on the bed.
Yes, I threw my socks. They didn't even
make a sound as they landed
like dreams on the bedspread.
And there was a time
when I was a fairly respectable
weightlifter and took karate,
and I was a gymnast too and am still
a strong swimmer. What has become of me?
I wonder what I'll throw
ten years from now when I get mad.