

Matthew Dulany

Cabin John

It was but a moment up ahead,
and in another fled.
The dog, with hackles bristling, soon discerned
and followed after its scent.
As always, at my whistling she returned.
Together then we went
a mile along the creekside path beyond
the meadow, round the bend,
to the clearing, where the power pylons
stride the ridge, and spotted
its rusty, wind-ruffed, and thick-set
coat among the mottled
white and tawny tussocks, stealing quickly.
Though she would follow, on
command the dog refrained, but heading back
she must have wondered when
the fox revealed itself across the creek,
just why it did so soon,
if on purpose, and who was following whom.

Some Advice for the Young

Hurry up and relax and try to keep
your eyes peeled and try to get some sleep
and quit that scratching when you're wearing wool.
You can't prepare for every variable,
just try to cultivate where arable,
bearing in mind no bear will bear a bull.

Sometimes it's good to lose your place in line
and almost any kind of wine is fine
but keep in mind if you indulge, indulge
in moderation, lest your belly bulge
or your what's-it-who's-it lose appeal.
Don't fuss too much about your lawn or feel

you have to keep abreast of current affairs.
It's good to know when it's good to take the stairs,
also when it's best to admit you're weak,
when it's worst to turn the other cheek,
when aching joints belie the clement weather,
when pivoting hips portend a night of pleasure.

If you decide to ride the rails through Reading
forgetting what direction you are heading
and are a late arrival to your wedding,
mother might not make her gift your bedding.
While we often must conform to norms,
success may manifest in many forms.

Eve

Bemused by the wren, so self-possessed
about the berryless vines and browning,

brittle nettles, by chicory gone to seed,
exploded milkweed pods in the late light,

and her own discreet footsteps through the collapsing grass,
over woolly bears that have forever quit crawling,

bemused by the troupe of hopeful poplars
applauding themselves at curtain call, bowing

in a protracted gust, bemused by the jet
carrying some hundred souls and numberless contingencies

now knifing through the cirrus stew in the deep blue bowl
above it all, by the not unhappy prospect

that desire may never again sway her heart,
by the ghostly moon bemused, she roams

the russet wood's periphery.