

Patrick Theron Erickson

VIEWPOINT

In the Dust Bowl
the dirt that gave us food
turned on us

There was no
seeing our way clear

compasses were useless
the dust was electric

barbed wire fences
were electrified
before there were electric fences

Maybe that's what gave the inventor
the idea for the electric chair

We had need of it
for those who couldn't see straight
to steer clear of the fences

until the Dust Bowl ended
and the air cleared

and we all saw
a little straighter.

A MOVABLE FEAST

Your meat sack
of a moustache

sharp as any
meat cleaver

bristles with ground round
or chipped beef

cloven hoofed
bad to the bone

barbecue sauce
or tomato paste
herbs and spices

And last night's provolone
hugs your jowls

And to think
we could have
ordered takeout
and eaten in

or taken it
on the chin
and eaten out

Think again!

BITTERSWEET IS THE CANCER

with its pincers out
red as the sun

that claws and pinches like a crab
when Capricorn is nowhere in sight

with flair, yes, at least a terabyte
and zip in every step

without pulling up lame
or pulling any punches

and without the dread of overexposure
or the saga of appeasement

with no stigma
no strings attached.

ETHER

A new totem
is called for

a new fetish
fetched

but not of stone
or wood, or fetching bronze

or yet of silver
or gold leaf

but of flesh and bone
passed muster
unstitched

the skullcap cloven
the gray matter red

When you wake
from the ether

you rise to find
it was more than your tonsils
they came for
or your wisdom teeth
they took

and left you something
less than ethereal

and easily mistaken
for something mistook.

THE RED WHEELBARROW REVISITED

A wheelbarrow
is just a barrel on a wheel

With a scoop in front
like a front end loader

you can pour forth
from it dirt or manure
or nearly any medium

as much and as often
as you will

Just haul it in
on a narrow plank
if need be

and dump it
like cement

A versatile tool
it has rightly
taken its place
in the workman's
toolshed alongside
his shovel and his pick

William Carlos Williams
wrote a poem about one
a red one

Almost overnight
it has taken its place
as an archetype

and of course
its load of manure

iconic

a most versatile planting medium
to be sure!