

Again

It's the last time I will see you,
and in the dream, you have woken.
You look around, pleased and a bit
ashamed. "I'm ok now," you say.
"I don't know what happened, maybe
just drank a little too much of that
light red wine last night. Sorry if I
scared you." Here you are, still old,
but now yourself again, clear eyes
and a voice free from bizarre illusions,
without terror and screams.
"What shall we have for breakfast?"
you say, "I can start the coffee."
You stand without trembling and you
walk toward the kitchen on steady legs.
I feel relief pour over me like a shower
of rain. We work together, gathering cups
and plates, toasting bread. Coffee smells
permeate the air and we sit together
eating in the old companionable way.
But even now I know something is wrong,
something tugs and tugs at my ear.
I'm afraid to blink, afraid to look away,
for when I do, your face will crumple,
your eyes empty like shallow ponds
in August heat, when frog songs stop
and, in the glare of sun, the world goes still.

[illegible]

Inside a Dream

Snowing on the Washington Mountain road.
Flakes fly in the wind, dance in the headlights.
On both sides of the road, woods lie black
and still. A deer steps out into the road,
turns her head as I brake,
slowly glide to a halt on the shoulder by the trees.
Time slows, then seems to stop.
She gazes at me with liquid eyes.
I sit in the car, breathing softly as snow
gathers on the windshield.
My fingers have become numb.
At last she turns, bounds north into the tree line.
The road winds higher, toward the mountain peak.
All day I have felt restless and strange, and now
in early nightfall, I have tumbled inside a dream.

Strange birds fly through naked trees,
calling and calling to the darkness and the cold.

[illegible]

Shadows

To walk empty roads and drink shadows—Tomaz Salamun

Empty roads, with an echo of snow,
birch and pine shifting in the wind.
We walk together through the hills,
drinking shadows as the day gets late.
You tell me you can see the snow's
white heart, how it throbs in moonlight
as it falls in the field.
You tell me you have been thirsty
for a long time. Shadows surround your face,
but I can see into the heart of you
as you walk calmly in the cold.
Your breath rises, but you keep a good pace
over the icy road.
Crows swing out of the woods,
wheeling north toward the high ridge.
You tell me again how you love the crows
with their black hearts, their amber eyes.
You tell me how you see into their hollow bones.
I see their shadows on the snow and I see into your eyes,
how bright they are with the pain and beauty of the world.



Steve Klepetar has recently relocated to the Berkshires in Massachusetts after 36 years in Minnesota. His work has received several nominations for Best of the Net and the Pushcart Prize, including three in 2017. Recent collections include *A Landscape in Hell*(Flutter Press), *How Fascism Comes to America* (Locofoco Chaps), and *Why Glass Shatters* (One Sentence Chaps).



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