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Four Poems by Dale Tracy

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Saving for the Future

A cold hillside in blue night
backed with trees, and sided,

planted with wild beasts, and domestic,
spaced two feet, breaking the crust,

exposed, curled tail to nose.

I can eat my seeds or press them in snow,

brown like the earth, silent like question mark.

How will they howl when they wake?

Compass Glottis

Ospreys live where I work. I use a bridge to cross the river full of fish.
I don't barrel my body across worlds like hungry Pandion who sees
as well wet or dry. The fossil record holds extinct sea hawks who died
flying and in brackish water with spicules-speared fish and without.
I don't soar or look underwater, and dry eyes become an eyesore.
When every compass holds a magnet, aiming is a trial and an error.
Arrows point to words stuck in teeth, filling cavities in gray amalgam
glinting out the molar's true north. I locked the important part inside
itself but the ferrous nearby deviates me until I surrender the binnacle.
Have you ever scooped from a pelican's beak? The prey's gone before
you could praise the swollen pouch, its secret sea, the hollow bones,
breast's ready air sacs, the inner empty inflation floating its own waters.

Our Dreams Are Land in a Goblet Made of Water

Peninsula, a fire burns
for the centre seating and the wings.
The trees are scarlet heavy curtain.
I watch the moon pull the curtains.
I watch the moon pull the oceans,

the oceans pull the plastics,
collect what we disperse,
then collect again,
each on our given days.

I watch the ocean feed the fire
the scenery, the greenery, the ductile
discarded heap. The players leap—

at night we fade out,
moons in morning.

Look for those who sleep
facedown in flowers,
bees in their ears because
they gave up
protection for pollen.
They find letters in petals
with eyes flapping lashes to float,
holding pupils above script to breathe.

A plane flies over fire,

wings flapping.

Every dream unhouses me
to floors I'm suffered to sleep on.
The melodrama's ripe self
bursting its seeds to grow the trees
of night brain: fertile, stretching,
glimmbrill.

Transposable

Times are that a pickup truck opens to the wrong driver, like a toilet bowl for a fish still swimming—it not mistaken for dead, but bowls taken as transposable. Any bowl works while it holds. The parking lot is full and I rub mirrors at every turn. I edge to a spot bordered by logs grounding the lot's boundary. In the sideview the crack between log and land shows the drop to river passing. I look up to the truck's shoulders in water. The truck matches the spot, identical. I squeeze out.

Later, the frogs wear coats of feather after they slaughter the birds. It's the age of amphibian until the keratin and hair degrades and all the naked burn dry. This is the new curtilage, the body's private yard of second skin.

Earlier, the fertile ground opened and we opened it, transposable. We built walls around our naked faces, demanding moat garden, obedient plant, military orchid, the parkly pleasance and sweet maudlin, the nonesuch of the olitory. The flower-of-an-hour is the one that gains ground, the ground that holds it.

Later, the water opens on its ground, the world-hold. The sky is isopropyl thin, evapping its far side into space's acres, building back atmosphere's invisible braces.

DALE TRACY, a contract faculty member, is an assistant professor in the Department of English, Culture, and Communication at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario. She is the author of *With the Witnesses: Poetry, Compassion, and Claimed Experience* (McGill-Queen's, 2017); the chapbooks *Celebration Machine* (Proper Tales, 2018) and *The Mystery of Ornament* (above/ground, 2020); and the chapoem *What It Satisfies* (Puddles of Sky, 2016). She received an honourable mention in Kalamalka Press's 2019 John Lent chapbook award contest, and her poems have appeared in print and online publications like *Poetry Pause*, *Touch the Donkey*, *The Week Shall Inherit the Verse*, *Gatherings*, *Dusie*, and *Chaudiere*.