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Three Poems

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Fish Hawk

An osprey hangs by its neck
below Adelaide bridge.
Snarled in old fishing line,
it sways gently over the face
of the river.

How the noose snapped
as its barbed talons reached out
to clutch the river's wet girth.

Wings fall akimbo
catch the weak breeze—
a cuckoo clock pendulum
irregular time, broken seconds.

See the silver lure glint,
the weight of its plunge,
the sound of parabolas
cast from the bridge.
Set the hook, reel in your catch.

Like the Hanged Man,
if the image lands inverted
the card's meaning flips—
the hawk dives upward
into the sky, towing behind it
a bridge ripped off its moorings.

The Osprey's mate
follows the river's course
back to its fledglings nested
in the light standards
over Tecumseh Park.

In one claw, a snake dangles
like a length of rope.
Does the snake see itself in the shape
of the river below?

Does the osprey ever catch
its own image in the water,
or does the rush of blood

always blind?

The Music of Ice

cracks tectonic
across our back yard;

chunks of green salt
pop on the sidewalk
like pumpkin seeds in a skillet,

submarine sonar sounds
the surface of a hardening lake,

artists carve vinyl
out of glaciers
and play them on gramophones.

I put my ear to a cup
of sloe gin fizz—a soundtrack
of my diminishing.

I know a farmer didn't name
the iceberg's making;
calving is a blood-wet bellow,
steam rising from straw,

wobbled newborns
fit with winter muffs,
so their ears won't hear
their own slow freezing.

Not a River Poem

This is not a river poem
No Nile, Ganges, real Thames,
fake Thames. No river
Styx, no rock group Styx,
No sticks! Twigs, branches,
no forks!

No oxbows
current-less, fish-less,
plankton starved, de-fowled—
The mink hunting goslings
was cut—see instead this big
red balloon!

No images
of frothing spume,
of a bulging green frog
clutched in your hand,
of words lost to water
churning over a dam,
of sewage outflow stench.

No germination
of eco-logic, no nuanced
investigations of
be-wildered bio-tropic
entanglements and glossy
drone shots of lithium
brine pools.

This poem is landlocked –not lying
on an ancient riverbed,
no extant watercourse.
It's a desert. It's always
been a desert. Elephants
cannot dig for water
under the sand with their
trunks. Beat it
Attenborough.

No water period.

No rain, no petrichor –
no switching, witching,
divining --- you can
forget lakes, seas, ocean.
H2O no you don't.
Cancel the pacific garbage
patch spinning and spinning
in a widening gyre. Look!
That big red balloon floats
a birthday that never ends.
We had such a great time.

This poem
isn't a metaphor for
an aquifer. No Greeks,
no vessels. No blood vessels.
It is ready to eat.
Algorithms fish your feed.
The 40% of our bodies
not made of water
churns inside a great vacuum,
spawning dirt devils
baptizing you
in a dusty bowl.

TOM CULL teaches creative writing at Western University and was Poet Laureate for the City of London from 2016-2018. His first collection of poems, *Bad Animals*, was published in 2018 by Insomniac Press. His second collection, *Kill Your Starlings*, is forthcoming from Gaspereau Press. Tom is the director of Antler River Rally, a grass roots environmental group he co-founded in 2012. ARR works to protect and restore Deshkan Ziibi. Tom is also an editor for *Watch Your Head*, an anthology of creative works devoted to climate justice.