

Three Poems

by Dennis Etzel, Jr.

Walmart as Faux Forest

I try to text an extinct bird
from inside a Walmart
CA heard her
in a Walmart I heard a scream

speaking of birds in a Walmart
I heard a set of knives were free
a sales pitched in Walmart
as predators fly above

only one knife allowed
per person everything
offered up by employees
by customers in Walmart

another good ol' Uncle Sam's club
arrive in boxes in trucks

Kingdom Triptych

1

what was rabbit kingdom is oil kingdom
rabbit energy now spent
on the kingdom of now
clearings for paper kingdom
those company kingdoms
pushed out most
shifting over pines and firs
for causes

2

reconfiguring a treeless kingdom
their thirst adding vacuums underneath

3

the kingdom forces earthquake
kingdoms of oil spills spoil
Alaskan and Louisianan kingdoms
leads to the spillage into our kingdom

rabbits whistle strike
rabbits strike in need
for kingdoms for rabbit species
kingdom America must end
for the Kingdom to become home

Bird Triptych

1

warbirds hovered over other countries
no one in the US panics at the hypnosis
when a child dies a bird dashes out
of the atmosphere that phoenix
myth I tell my children about
easier for when the drones fly
with mannequins to aim for
I can't lay my children down
to sleep as drones
repeat the casualties
like a prayer a dream

2

Joe birding with attention
ballgames we come to lit
at night birds flock to the stadium
drawn by artificial suns
 we can't see
security at every gate
drones we barely spot
with spots in our eyes
caused by human-made brightness

3

a sky during this daydream
while singing pathetic
fallacies I call cardinals
I place another crow here
I hoped to read
this world instead
of this red-button elegy

Dennis Etzel Jr. lives with Carrie and the boys in Topeka, Kansas where he teaches English at Washburn University. He has an MFA from The University of Kansas, and an MA and Graduate Certificate in Women and Gender Studies from Kansas State University. He has three chapbooks: *The Sum of Two Mothers* (ELJ Publications 2013), *My Graphic Novel* (Kattywompus Press 2015), and *This Removed Utopia* (Spartan Press 2017). His first poetic memoir *My Secret Wars of 1984* (BlazeVOX 2015) was selected by *The Kansas City Star* as a Best Poetry Book of 2015. *Fast-Food Sonnets* (Coal City Review Press 2016) is a 2017 Kansas Notables Book selected by the State of Kansas Library. His work has appeared in *Denver Quarterly*, *Indiana Review*, *BlazeVOX*, *Fact-Simile*, *1913: a journal of poetic forms*, *3:AM*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, *DIAGRAM*, and others. He is a TALK Scholar for the Kansas Humanities Council and leads poetry workshops in various Kansas spaces. Please feel free to connect with him at dennisetzeljr.com.