

Two Poems

by Victoria Sherry

Driving Away

One by one, the markers
that guided you down
this road will vanish below
the arc of the horizon
the way Plains towns disappear
at the brink of land and sky,
the way emptiness swells
inside an hourglass as the sand
slides through: whole worlds
gone in the blink of an eye.

One by one, you inscribe
in stone the names of those
who awaited your arrival
on this earth. Driving away,
you see the ground begin
to open in the distance,
ready to receive your body
the way the water did.

Someone already traveled
the unmarked pavement
now stretched before you
to fill that opening with light.

Family Vacation

Powdery ash dusting the floor of the firepit
told us others had worshiped here before us—
perhaps last night, perhaps a thousand years ago.
In the forests of our annual pilgrimage, the nightly
rituals never changed: wood stacked with care
beneath the charred iron grate of the family altar,
pungent licks of flame driving back the velvet
fingers of the night, pale flesh of rainbow trout
that swam the nearby stream this morning
sizzling in the cast-iron skillet like an offering,
firstfruits of a day begun in holiness beside
the deep swift water, clearer than a summer sky,
the only sound the whip of nylon line through
dew-thick air, lures floating silent on the ripples.

A hunger like no other would consume us
as we lit the humming lantern, as we placed
our metal plates upon the slabbed wooden table,
as we waited for more stars than we had ever
seen to melt the roof of our existence, to speak
to us the distant language of the divine.

Victoria Foth Sherry divides her time between writing poems, editing manuscripts, and working at the best bookstore in the world, Eighth Day Books in Wichita.