

George Lober

How Each Day Goes

A June morning,
mist lifting off
the pines out front,
a gray sky breaking
into gaps of blue,
squirrels clattering
down a scrub oak—
bounding across
an open patch of hill
and up a trunk
on the other side—
soft shadows on
the dry grass,
a red shouldered
hawk overhead,
crows gliding like
wraiths among the trees.
Any moment deer may
step over the ridge,
hummingbirds and
house finches flit
in the garden;
later the neighbors'
dogs may escape
to hunt the hill,
followed after dusk
by coyotes, raccoons.
Standing on the step
coffee in hand,
I've learned this
is how each day goes,

the preying and
the preyed upon,
so differently from
my world, yet so not.

What Matters

You can glare at the rain
as long as you want.

You can curse it, even though
you know this land needs it
as much as you need breath.

You can stand in your kitchen
hearing it ping the skylight,
and watch it run in waves
at the window over the sink,
and you can resent the fact
that at six-thirty in the morning,
the day you planned already
has come off the rails.

You know this as surely as you
know the traffic will be terrible,
the storm drain will clog,
and the dog will not go out,
and you know the last because
after ten years you understand
that animal half as well as it
understands you, because
by now you know the smell
of its fur, its breath, the look
of trust it holds for you,
even the sideways glance
which signals it will do
anything for you, except
go out on a morning like this.

And watching the wind rake
the pine tops, you can predict
already the emails waiting,
the running path turning
to mud, and someone at work
telling you once again

not to worry, it's just a dog.
All of this you can see
and hear and feel standing
there coffee in hand:
the rain, wind, a washed sky,
the dog turning in its bed
by the back door, even the hum
of the refrigerator,
all moving through you
like a memory you can't place,
a lesson you learned once
but forgot. What was it?
Something kind, assuring,
maybe, even as the thought fades,
something about what matters.

George Lober is the author of two books of poetry *Shift of Light* and *A Bridge to There*. His poems have appeared in numerous journals and e-zines, including the *Homestead Review*, *Eclectic Literary Forum (ELF)*; *MiPoesias*; *Lily*; *Sage*; *Quarry West*; *The Sandhill Review*; *The Porter Gulch Review*, *Red Wheelbarrow*, and *The Monterey Poetry Review*. He is a former winner of the Spectrum Poetry Prize, the Ruth Cable Memorial Prize for Poetry and currently lives in Monterey, California.