

Danny Earl Simmons

The Air at Avery Park on a Day like Today

tastes smooth as the sleepy brew
of yellow melting green into a steam

so sweet there is nothing left to do
but breathe and think yourself back in time

to the day your dad dropped by and promised
he'd never leave again – which he didn't

for a sorta long time.

She Told Me Once Her Name Is Gigi

I don't know where she got it,
but she says it with enough *oo la la*
to lead me to believe she was weaned
on strong coffee and croissant,

and, even though she's walker-old,
she smiles during her afternoon strolls
as if remembering how easy a thing
the inspiration of breathy French exclamations
used to be. We exchange pleasantries and pass

in the opposite direction. She tells me again
how happy she is to "still be here on Planet Earth."
I know this is her way of saying she's glad
she hasn't died yet and gone to heaven,

but her wording makes me wish
that Wilford Brimley and Don Ameche
would suddenly jitterbug by to whisk her away
for a dip in an alien-cocoon-steeped pool
as they await the Mother Ship and immortality.

Of course, it never happens. Another thing
that never happens is me turning around,
walking with her awhile, asking her
how she got her name.

Signum Crucis

She slams the Father-shot
in one experienced gulp,
head thrown all the way back,
and rattles to the burning soothe.

She lingers in her exhale,
reaches for the Son, swallows
him hard and hurries
to complete her holy trinity.

Turning the spent Holy Ghost upside down
on the sticky wet bar, she closes her eyes,
lets her head dangle, swirls it around,
and enjoys being half way to abandon.

She wiggles to the dance floor,
twirls with Bobby before moving on
to a couple of unknowns
and getting to know them.

When her glow gets runny
she returns for second service.
First, the Ex and his bluish-purple rage;
she keeps her eyes closed and lets herself believe

it wasn't all locked-up tight
and letting the neighbors know.
Bobby hears another of her moans
over the glorious thump of the bass.

Next, the Girls, a twenty-something
triumvirate of crossed arms and pursed lips
over the day-in-and-day-out blur
of her jaded green eyes.

She sips the last shot slowly,
selects a Soon-to-Know-Well,
gestures across her chest
and slurs *Amen*.

On Adam and Eve

Maybe he was a natural in the sack, or maybe
she liked her ribs tickled after dinner. Who knows,

maybe she thought it looked like a slimy sci-fi
thing full of nothing but need. When all there was

was forward and pondering barely intelligible lisps of lies,
when wrath was ice-cold and slaked like a lemonade of whys

squeezed into a thick yellow pulp, did they ever stop
to wonder how everything could have gone so wrong?

How limber, their now imperfect minds! How daintily
they could clink glasses with the polite society of their loins.

How often did he ask *Can I ever be inside you and still feel
the need for air?* Did rash waiting spread into a distracted

bounce of us against them? Do we really need to mention
the possibility that she turned around and told him to leave?

Maybe all he wanted was one more try before finally giving in
to the long hard blasphemy of damnation.

Loud as Dragonfire

One feature common among the winged creatures of mythology is their overall readiness to curse. The Middle Ages were covered in dark brown gravy thickened with flour and seasoned with salt.

I would have made an excellent rack of ribs. Hope never draws sharks or flies; it draws things that go from gray to blue to gray again and, on late afternoons, beach up on stars. Worry, however, likes

to get drunk, stupid, and stumble to bed. Fear loves posting selfies of its frowns and lap-dances for a better set of brushes or another shot of turpentine. I discovered that recently while writing love notes

to half-drunk karaoke blondes on the far side of the bar who sounded just like monks moaning chants after drinking seasonal ale and turning loud as dragonfire.

Danny Earl Simmons is an Oregonian and a proud graduate of Corvallis High School. He is a friend of the Linn-Benton Community College Poetry Club and currently serves on its Poetry Advisory Committee. His poems have appeared in a variety of journals such as *The Pedestal Magazine*, *Little Patuxent Review*, *IthacaLit*, *San Pedro River Review*, and *Off the Coast* where he now assists as a member of the editorial staff.