

## Richard Dinges

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### Small Dog Follows

A small dog follows  
me, room to room,  
yaps when I sit.  
White teeth flash  
over pink tongue,  
eyes wide, red-rimmed  
at my nonchalance,  
my quiet time  
alone with thoughts.  
A hollow echo  
on bare wood floors,  
something nagging,  
forgotten, left at the door,  
hovers in another room.

## Screen Saver

Winter walks in sleet  
and snow behind  
glass panes. I live  
these dark months  
in well-lighted boxes,  
caramel floors slick  
with wet boot prints,  
fluorescence softly  
washing color from  
blood frozen in chapped  
cheeks, a slap  
in the face followed  
by dull chatter on phones  
and a screen saver's  
eternal glowing promise  
of bright warm beaches.

## **New Garden**

In this new garden,  
trees grow and die  
despite names and rules.  
Knowing nothing of sin,  
they shed bark,  
an unseemly display  
of bare trunk, no  
skin, leaf fans  
and rippling roots  
testing air, taken  
in long slow waves,  
a burst of green  
against blue sky,  
shadow and light.

## **Dark Myths**

Among these myths,  
dark woods, moans  
and shadows, ragged  
remnants of last year's  
leaves, whispers or  
rustles on cool dark  
breezes that sparkle  
a pond, bright under  
mid-day sun  
that reveals nothing,  
I am surrounded  
by memories not  
my own, burdened  
even before night falls.

## **Dark Diet**

Buried in green  
by weeks of rain,  
my eyes remain brown  
with flecks of moss.  
I stare into a denim  
sky with smears  
of gray. Tree limbs  
reach out to me,  
neither cradle nor tomb.  
I lie between,  
in summer's midst.  
Panting and sweaty,  
I melt one drop at a time  
into dark dirt.

**Richard Dinges** has an MA in literary studies from University of Iowa and manages business systems at an insurance company. *The Same, Miller's Pond, Orbis, Licking River Review*, and *Illya's Honey* most recently accepted his poems for their publications.