

Three Poems by Elizabeth Schultz

Fractured Reflections

We stood by a frozen river,
its surface ridged and
coruscated. I urged return
to a warm fire. He was
abstracted by a dark scar
embedded in the ice. I mused
on the trees' tangle opposite us.
He observed harsh designs.
I saw that this crust of ice
showed fractured reflections.
We dared step out among
small sandy pools by the shore,
though the river, quixotic
as spring, flowed beyond us
in its rough trough. We waited
for the crack.

Skating Backwards

Slipping so smoothly,
the sky opening up like
a bouquet, clouds,
swelling white flowers
in my gathering arms,
I skated backwards,

focused on blades
criss-crossing, sharper,
faster, ice spitting,
hissing, clouds receding,
scattered faces flashing
from mufflers, scarves,
hands outstretched,

holding me back as I sank
into the white blizzard,
colors colorless, fences
swirled away, knowing
the only way out was
to slam into the black ice.

Queen Bee

1.

With the queen bee closeted away,
the house drones hum about the hive,
dusting, sweeping, ironing, scouring.
They allow her idiosyncrasies—gauze
gowns, exotic pollens. They set
honey-pots before her door, delight
in her dalliances, and deliver up
the daily buzz, their satisfaction mild
and mindless, for she is theirs alone.

2.

Inside her cell, the queen bee considers
the machinery's serenity. Anguish,
long distilled into her heart's dark amber,
keeps adoration in check. She knows
humiliation's sting, raw welts
upon a soul, the trespasses upon her self.
She spends her days transforming
desire and despair, wild and sweet,
into production, and cannot stop

Following retirement from Kansas University's English Department, where she was known as a Melville scholar, **Elizabeth Schultz** became a dedicated advocate for the arts and the environment. She continues to write about the people and places she loves and has published two scholarly books, five books of poetry (three in 2014: *The Sauntering Eye*, *Mrs. Noah Takes the Helm*, *The Quickenings*), a memoir, a collection of short stories, and a collection of essays. Her scholarly and creative work has appeared in numerous journals and reviews. Contact at 1545 University Dr., Lawrence, KS 66044 or eschultz@ku.edu