

Three Poems by Kate Aver Avraham

Norfolk Pine

Perhaps it was foolish
to pry it out of its foil-wrapped holiday pot,
plant it next to the bedroom window.
Only two feet tall then,
its long graceful fronds, like fingers,
beckoned me beyond the season,
beyond the tinsel and missing
loved ones.

Now its twelve-foot sprawl
bends over our waking,
over our sleeping and the random
patchwork of our dreams.
Its branches house squawking blue jays,
doleful-eyed mourning doves,
generations of spiders
and their fragile, gossamer traces.

So when the gardener says,
Messy, roots no good for house,
should cut down...
how can I explain, as I shake my head,
that I have come to know this tree,
a familiar immensity
that scratches at the glass
with its rough, pointed tips
as if it wants to be let in.

That one moment

when I fall unexpectedly to my knees
in front of the plush, blue couch
lips mouthing *thank you, thank you...*

When all the years
I thought she would never grow up
feared some quirk of fate would spirit her away
like it did her older brother.

When all that disappears
as I remember her walking toward the dormitory—
quick spunky step, high heels clicking
cascade of glossy, black hair swinging back and
forth.

And just before the glass doors swallow her
she turns, gives me a *shit, I can do this grin...*

which is the picture I hold
that one moment when gratitude becomes my body
and I kneel with centuries
of what prayer might really be...

lift my hands
almost bring them together
palm to palm, fingers pointing upwards.

When the First Line Just Won't Come

start with the second.

It's often more willing, desirous of attention
like a middle child, second or third born.

One who kept quiet, learned
from the mistakes of its older sibling
and didn't stay out too late, or
managed to climb out the bedroom window
without getting caught.

A child who always said please,
ate her brussel sprouts,
only teased the baby
when no one was looking.

A line as compliant as a second child
will fit in without talking back or tantrums,
take its place in the natural order of things,
never complain about hand-me-downs,
all the while waiting
for her big break when the first line
runs away with the biker punk down the road,

and she gets to move
into the first line's room, rearrange everything,
wear the low cut, red party dress
hanging in her sister's closet,
maybe say the "F" word if she feels like it!

Kate Aver Avraham is a published poet and children's author. Her picture book *What Will You Be, Sara Mee?* came out in 2011 from Charlesbridge. Kate's poetry has appeared in many journals and anthologies. In 2010, she received the Celebration of the Muse chapbook award for her book *Perhaps the Truth is Also Blue*. Kate is the founder of Blue Moon Creations, a non-profit artistic endeavor to aid charities locally and globally. She is a native Santa Cruzan living by the sea she loves.