

Three Poems by Laura Bayless

Chairs in the River

Three weathered wooden chairs
sit empty facing each other,
a conversation arrangement
recalling sounds of laughter
and banter one might hear
muted now into the whirr of water
flowing over a bank of stones.

Sunlight through cottonwoods
pools shadows across the seats.
Wet stains creep up the legs,
like cityscapes at dawn,
the outline of tall buildings.

A cluster of large and small rocks
lies half-submerged in the stream,
a curious family unconnected.
Ripples, fluid messages, slide
under the silent chairs.

Nearby a branch with teardrop leaves
hovers a few feet above
the westward drifting river.
On the other bank a fallen sycamore trunk
collects debris from winter storms,
rests like a broken arm against a redwood.

Though you might claim this place
your green temple where sequins gleam
on vibrations of the brook in motion,
this is my Big Sur landmark,
where childhood memories surface
and wash downstream.

Early in January

Unsettled skies smudge
bay waters gray,
drift over deserted coves.
Breakers rumble and boom,
leave retreating silver membranes
on shifting dunes.

I revisit all the places
I have been before,
consider accidental obstacles
another year may bring.

My wallet holds yesterday's fortune
cookie paper strip, *Your luck
has completely changed today.*
Unappeasable dreams
come ashore and depart.

Forms of Deceit in Normal Hats

He only says what he believes,
even if he's rounded fourth base

at a hockey game and
can't hear the crowd shouting
go back to Minnesota.

He finds the least important
details and hammers them
on the head of a pin
seeks answers where questions
have run amok.

You leave him on his
hamster treadmill,
hear him calling out
for egg whites, nutrition
store supplements,
another doormat.

You're already three miles away,
taking up with little people
and rock musicians,
evolving into anything
but humble.

In addition to poetry, **Laura Bayless** explores creativity through collage, photography, and absurdity. Formerly shy, she now delights in requests to read her poems to strangers.