

Three Poems by Laura Bayless

McWay Canyon

At the bluff's overlook
a sea breeze blows steadily
across the rocky coast
despite cypress grove windbreak.

I retreat to a picnic table
under towering redwoods,
bask briefly in small sunlit sphere.

This is the way of light
through the forest, filtering down
to enhance a single branch,
patch of sorrel, parcel of leafy green.

Stellar jay, sapphire blue with black crest
comes begging.
I have no crumbs to offer,
spellbound by dappled forest
and moving creek watersong.

I consider how
there really are no words
for the qualities of light,
what it brings to the surface
or how it paints my world.

Infatuation

I have an ongoing love affair,
adore the fragility of things with wings,
those delicate creatures
who often have such brief lives.
How like the foreshortened days
of my first two children,
my boy and girl *lepidoptera*,
still beautiful, innocent
of our world's cruelties.

I think how they
were spared my sorrows,
fairy-winged mythical pixies
for whom forest and flower
were simply principle
elements of their world,
leaf for a plate, acorn cap
for a bowl, muddy puddle
under the rhododendron
a pond to swim in.
Swallowtail, painted lady,
wood-nymph, cabbage white,
mourning cloak, skipper,
crayon-box colored metaphors.

Just a shadow of two wings enough.

Volitation

High above my valley
three turkey vultures soar and circle.

Just outside my deck,
a fledgling crow perches on
the thin branch of a pine.
Five ebony defenders shield
their vulnerable kin,
swoop and orbit to defeat
two hungry sharp-shinned hawks,
aerial choreography
against powder blue firmament.

With their dark-banded tail feathers,
rusty cross-barred chests
and gray white throats,
the ravenous pair dive toward their prey,
battle the black-winged troops
to an indecisive finale.

Correspondent instinct and drama
unfurl on an early summer day.

Laura Bayless is the author of four collections of poetry, *The Edge of the Nest*, *White Streams and Touchstones*, *Persistent Dreams* and *Chairs in the River* (FutureCycle Press). Her poems have appeared in local and national publications, and anthologies, including *Dancing on the Brink of the World*, *Selected Poems of Point Lobos*, *Porter Gulch Review*, *The Homestead Review*, and *Blue Heron*. In addition to writing poetry, Laura explores creativity through collage, photography, and absurdity.