

Three Poems by William A. Greenfield

Butterfly Bushes

Coincidentally, we both did the research and found that the species is often considered invasive; its seeds caught in the whimsy of the wind, taking root in the most undesirable of locations. But I planted five of them anyway. I should have planted them years ago. *We live in the woods*, I thought. Who will care if some small alien bushes pop up beneath secluded ash and maple trees. You then spoke my thoughts and pointed out that we won't be around anyway. It often comes down to that. Maybe I should have planted a Burning Bush, the *poster child* for invasive plants, with its fire red toxins from the Far East to accent autumn's living menageries. When I built a wall to contain the plants, I wondered how many frosts and thaws it would take to warp its elegant strength. Distracted by an orange Monarch, I was both jealous and selfish at this haggard dawn of September.

You told me that, if I deadhead
them, the seeds will not catch
the wind. “Next year” I said.
“Maybe next year.”

Two Dollars' Worth

Mama cashed checks at the local market and made deposits to cover the checks she wrote yesterday, because papa didn't get paid until tomorrow. He would get angry and make mama cry while she made fried eggs for dinner. Mama would get angry when papa went to the races. Once she threw a glass pitcher at him as he ran down the back stairs. But he hit a big one once and bounded up the stairs and said we were going to the lake. I was falling asleep in the back seat foot well when papa pulled into the Esso station and smiled at Mr. Riley. "Gimme two dollars' worth" papa said. Somewhere upstate we pulled off the highway and mama pulled clean clothes from a brown paper bag as I shivered in the crisp dawn air. Papa liked the lake's crystal clear majesty and mama liked counting ground hogs and rabbits along the highway. Papa found a cheap cabin for the night and mama made us sandwiches. Once, we went to Frontier Town. I fiddled with a cowboy trinket

on the ride back through the mountains. All that was left was enough to get us home. “Gimme two dollars’ worth” papa said.

I Wanted to be a Science Teacher

For the earth rockets through periapsis at sixty six thousand miles per hour while the jewels of Orion hang like an infant's mobile. Ice crystals defy some law of motion. This miracle you can witness, you can learn from a book; not a stigmata, not a resurrected king or a sea swallowing soldiers and chariots. I wanted to be a science teacher because the inside of stones that I cleave are beautiful and science can explain this beauty. I wanted to be a science teacher because diamonds are formed from carbon; an assumed recipe of the natural world. But I can touch a diamond. I cannot touch an angel. I wanted to be a science teacher so I could measure evil, so I could quantify the love I have to offer, like putting a value on clothing and old dishes given to the poor. I wanted to be a science teacher so I could explain how a trillion synapses travel through the human brain faster than the fluttering of an angel's wings.

William A. Greenfield is a writer of poetry, a part time public service worker, a fairly good poker player, and a fairly poor golfer. He resides in Liberty, NY with his wife, son, and a dog; always a dog. Winner of Storyteller Magazine's *People's Choice Award* in 2012, William

has had poems published in dozens of literary journals, including *The Westchester Review*, *Carve Magazine*, *The East Coast Literary Review*, and many others. His chapbook, *Momma's Boy Gone Bad*, was published in February 2017 by Finishing Line Press.