

Nature Knows Better

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I pass through two acres of Colorado snow-dusted monkey grass
before anything interesting catches my eye.

I am out here for no other reason than to clear my mind,
thinking that maybe the bitter autumn breeze
or the gusts through the white-spotted pines might have an answer.
Sometimes nature knows us better than we know ourselves.

It is during these walks that I begin to understand not only nature,
but the nature of humanity—not just, “why do things happen?”
but, “why do we make things happen?”

The somber oaks and snowy fields know more than
dusty journals and yellowed papers can tell.
Sometimes, it's best just to ask them.

It is never a voice that I hear, nor the wind whispering in my ear;
it is a subtle kinetic gesture. The wind will pick up,
the trees directing the grass away from the sun and toward
something more foreboding, something dark,
toward a secret of humanity that not even the best
tricks can hide.

The wind stops, and I stop. I watch for clues, for another breeze.
Nothing. Around me, the brown grass brushes my knees,
and dark clouds sludge forward toward this meadow.

Another breeze directs me a few more steps forward,
and stops when I stop.

I stand before a little girl's body.

This could be anyone, but the fact that she is here,
that she is now found, doesn't calm me.

The grass is a respectful blanket,
clothing her when no clothes are to be found.
Her purple-black neck is wrinkled like that of a woman six
times her age. But she knows no better.

Only nature knows better.

The wind is quiet, and it begins to snow as I imagine
the parents of this child, how they must be looking
out into the deep gray, holding a cup of coffee,
fooled into an illusion of warmth and comfort.

The killer is out there somewhere, too.
Maybe in another field, in the same field,
doing the same thing again.

But he can't hide forever. The same grass on which
I stand knows where he has been,
what he has done, how he did it.

An hour later, the body, now covered in snow
to the last clawing finger tip, is nearly at rest.

Nature's blanket tucks her into bed
one last time. Soon, that finger that captured
her last moment of life will be covered.

Soon, the earth will keep her secret.