

ANITA SAGASTEGUI

Reaching, 2018
Archival photographic print, 20 x 30 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

DION O'REILLY

Another Happiness

Publish your best work, find a decent job.
Eat some sizzling octopus, the many
kissing tentacles meaty on your tongue.
Success, you think. *Joy!* For a while anyway,
then it's another mess in the papers, the endless
scroll of rapists and dead turtles, another
photo of a world leader with his corn-baked face.

So you go on a car trip north to find
some good rain. It's more minutes
of your life ticked off
by the mile markers on I-5. You get to Seattle,
and the lawns are scab brown,
your old home on the lake—a lime-green high-rise.
Always looking for something.
Answer keys. Antidepressants.
More friends, another dog, another slim book of poetry
where the poet keeps pushing and pushing,
line after line of exquisite description, one astonished
metaphor after another, escalating into an ecstatic revelation.

You can't write like that.
You don't read enough Virgil and Milton, don't start
your day writing lines of iambic pentameter.
Detroit, Detroit, Detroit, Detroit, Detroit.
And you can't meditate like some of the big names do.
When you sit, it feels like termites streaming in and out
of your arteries. On the screen of your inner vision,
all your arrogance, ecstasy, and gloom.
Your crappy conversations with the bitches in Zumba Gold
telling you to put a prong collar
on your mutt, irrigate your nostrils, get therapy.

But admit it—sometimes in fall, you look up and see
an arrowhead of duck flight, lonesome and luxurious.
If only you could understand
how fungus flowers from the mind of the land,
how fractal arms of trees shard the sky.
If only you could exalt
in ash falling, the West on fire,
it would be like you'd just arrived on Earth.

Dion O'Reilly's poetry manuscript *Ghost Dogs* was a finalist for the 2019 Catamaran Poetry Prize. She has spent much of her life on a farm in the Santa Cruz Mountains of California. Her writing appears or is forthcoming in *New Ohio Review*, the *Massachusetts Review*, *New Letters*, *Sugar House Review*, *Rattle*, *The Sun*, *Spillway*, *Bellingham Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *SWWIM*, and many other journals and anthologies.