

Two Poems

Jona L. Pedersen

eulogy for the giant water bug in the target parking lot

streetlights spoke with you,
little lighthouses beckoning titanic—
but you are my moby doll
and the harpoon is my needle
in your exoskeleton
serrating like your pincers
dragging prey to the coulee depths
and delivering the killing blow. in these rivers
you may be nøkken's violin, but here?
your angel wings fumble
across the parking lot.

your collision into target
reminds me of drowning:
swimming pool blues
haloing my body
on vhs tape. I wonder if
that's how you feel
when I carry you in my purse
and take you home
where I lay you to rest
in the back of the freezer.
as your body surrenders,
are you dreaming in vhs
or of winter?

the english coulee

is called english because here
the english majors congregate
after dark, purifying
what no longer serves us.
the shattered light
of our demolished lighthouse
skims the water's surface
like fireflies seeking each other
in the june night.

descendants
of paradise skip hopscotch
in reverse, leaving tamagotchi
ghosts in our wake. here, in our river
of eden, there's no more birthday
cake—only blown-out wishes
and fragmented light, drifting down
the coulee's spine; pooling together
where we drowned the false prophet
and baptized ourselves
in his blood.

as september lurks
we drink from the coulee's mouth
an elixir of youth. we lie
in the water's embrace
dreaming. then, we awaken
on the darkest day of winter,
surrounded by the lighthouse remnants
of our reckoning, and now,
the coulee carries our bodies

home again—
where crows never die,
wishes upon ladybugs
always come true, and
candles on the cake
never blow out;
our bodies
afame.

Jona L. Pedersen grew up in Norway, but has since relocated to the US where they are pursuing English and biology at the University of North Dakota. Their work appears in *Floodwall*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, and *The Allegheny Review*. When they aren't studying or writing, they like to explore the outdoors, roll dice with friends, and create art. Other passions such as wildlife biology, entomology, and environmental justice also inspire their writing. Check out their other work at www.jonalpedersen.com or follow their Twitter @JonaLPedersen for updates.