

Two Poems

HENRI COLE

Elevation

The pigs eat the rats that eat the corn,
and we eat the pigs and forget about this.
Life leads to death.

Like a study in genteelness,
you were neatly dressed in a jacket
and trousers. Removing your coffin,
they leant it up against a wall. Things always
start out organized and get messier.
Outside, birds scattered, *jip-jip* and *pip-pip-pip*,
as some new version of America formulated itself.

Each night I dreamed the dream called *elevation*
in which a wondrous man doth seek my hand & my heart.
Then I awoke, and he departed.

Look at the flock of pigeons
flying into a thunderhead! I always feel such an elevation
when small things overmaster the great.

Human Highway

We were encountering turbulence.
 I stood on a gilded balcony,
 beyond which a parade of humans marched—
 vagrants, self-haters, hermits, junkies,
 chumps, the defeated, the paranoid,
 the penniless, and those led astray by desire—
 moving backwards instead of forwards,
 because this is how life can be understood.
 Earth fell silent, except for the gnashing teeth
 of its tormentors, and it was as if we were in some kind
 of holding pattern. Shadows vanished,
 but daylight seemed delayed.

Then, suddenly,

in the kitchen, black coffee percolated.
 A pussy cat purred at my feet.
 I cut open the throat of a grapefruit.
 In the backyard, a groggy bat searched for home.
 A sapling listed back and forth.
 Out on the human highway,
 summer rains came early to our small house,
 across from a cornfield,
 and bread and education came, too,
 as happiness unfolded like a strange
 psychedelic moth, or the oldest unplayable
 instrument, made from a warrior's skull,
 our happiness a little bone flute.