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Three Poems by Trent Busch

Mock Heirs

To the few who see their childhood dreams realized, anything is possible, a grain of sand in a bucketful, or a beachful, and their commercials promise us that we, too, can park our Jeep atop the sheer monument.

Now we who have had our share of accidents know the risk of words that are given rein to wander over whatever countryside, the hairpin sleights and spins, and guess what product is being sold here.

How easily the only bull in the herd swats flies, genetically groomed to be the envy of those out of fortune, not far beyond, whose only comfort is the mock mounting among other mock heirs.

The bucketful knows what the chosen grain can't know about randomness, living in two worlds, the promised isle, if forever out of reach, ever in the mind, knowing the small chance of even this horizon.

We don't doubt the motive, but wonder sometimes whose words we hear, as if deed could balance with desire and bluster convince us to charge our glory, as if by some slight variance we could make it true.

Flagman

So you think it's easy standing with a slow/stop sign on one side of the curve, some look-alike you don't even know about skirts that ride up under seat belts on the other.

Oh, it's easy when you're fifteen sweating in ten acres of dry hay or working in your old man's warehouse, but when you're a man and been one still wearing a red-jacket halter that was made to fit no one,

you stop and consider.

I haven't even mentioned the boredom
or the lack of respect from anyone
curious enough to meet your eye
or the embarrassment when you maybe meet
some lady in a bar after work,
jawing to her where your living's at:
Well, I'm a highway engineer, Ma'am.

If you think this ain't the way I think,
come on down try her once and see.
I know there's danger and we save lives
and it's work that's got to be done,
but I've got more sense than that—
you think I don't, say it to my face,
you highfalutin son of a bitch.

Academic Discourse

It's as if I, as everybody
else, know nothing, metaphors as
clean and barbless as plains of snow,

marveling at originality
in a few masters, theme sustained
for a thousand lines or pages,

and every subordinate or word
contributing (who looking at
a mountain sees a rock misaligned?).

Guessing and naïve we go to school
and teach more guessing, not sounding
the depths ourselves, not camped in a hut

on the brink where one mistake not
only sullies our lives but smears
the canvas and slanders elegance.

Will opinion be forever
modern? Tribal leaders forgetting
the savage in their best warriors,

bare and muscular, minding paths
and spoor, untamed by the daily
business, sleeping with their spear.

Trent Busch is a native of rural West Virginia who now lives in Georgia where he makes furniture. His poems have appeared in many journals including *Best American Poetry 2001*, *Poetry*, *Hudson Review*, *Southern Review*, *Georgia Review*, *Threepenny Review*, *Shenandoah*, *The Nation*, *American Scholar*, and more recently in *Notre Dame Review*, *The Evansville Review*, *Agni Online*, *Rattle*, and *Boston Review*.

