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THREE POEMS BY MICHAEL ESTARROOK

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Egret

Tall gray bird, an egret I think, standing
in the shallows of a small pond
over in the fields behind the high school,
poised, quiet, elegant, intensely focused,
his head with its long beak
snapping suddenly like a whip
into the water, stabbing at one
of the innumerable, plump, brown
tadpoles beginning to kick their frog legs.
But he misses, comes up dry,
his beady eyes staring down
into the dark water, incredulous
at having missed and,
if I didn't know better, a little
bit embarrassed about it too.

My Grandma Sadie

One of the survey questions
was to name a few
of the key influential people in my life.
I didn't have to think about it long:
Shakespeare, Dante, Mozart,
Whitman, Thoreau, and my Grandma Sadie.
just noticed that none of them
are still alive, but that doesn't
stop me from talking
to them regularly. Fortunately,
I suppose, my Grandma Sadie
is the only one who ever
feels impelled to talk back.

100 Colorful Plastic Pieces

(for Kerry)

1961 was a difficult
Christmas: my brother Kerry
poked his eye with a stick

& had to wear a patch
he hated
worse than death.
& my father,
although we didn't know it
then, had the cancer
growing
inside, eating him up,
& he was different
you see,
never himself again.
& my other brother was still
wetting
the bed, & God
did that ever make my father
nuts.
& me, well, I fell over
into the tree
while reaching up to hang
an ornament;
slipped off the old green
vinyl hassock with the tears
taped over with masking tape,
& crashed into
our beloved tree.
then Mr. Watts from across
the street
fell into our tree too;
he was reeling drunk
& fell right on Kerry's
brand new Mr. Machine breaking it
into
100 colorful plastic pieces.

Michael Estabrook is a marketing communications manager for a tiny division of a gigantic company. As my avocation, I've been writing poetry for so long that Methuselah should be taking notice, but in reality, time is simply doing its thing streaking ahead blithely pulling all of us along for the wild ride whether we like it or not; reminds me, I've published 15 chapbooks over the years, the last one just came out about my Dad, *methinks I see my father*, done in cahoots with the talented Glenn Cooper from Australia, and before that was *when Patti would fall asleep*, about my wife.

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