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Three Poems

by John Grey

The Death of a Family Picnic

Yes I was angry at the rain.
Sorry God, I used your name.
In vain as it turned out
because it never did stop raining,
not that day nor the next.

And when You throw in human nature,
well that's a mess too isn't it.
Rain, the ones complaining
because it's raining...
and You wonder why my blood's
about to burst.

The weekend was a washout.
I bet You didn't let it rain
on your first Sabbath
when you sat back
and admired the splendor
of Your own creation.

But a drive into the country,
some swimming,
a picnic on the grass,
was all I asked
and you denied me.
I wouldn't even have complained
if there were ants.
But, then again,
we're the ants in this aren't we?

Bird at the Window

The bird pecks the pane
of the picture window
then flies back to its branch.

I've invaded his territory
but I'm not going anywhere
apparently.

A fleck of reflection in the glass
is the bird that owns this castle.

I watch him from the couch,
never more huge,
never more powerful,
than when this tiny creature decides
there's no way I can be driven out.

He flies away reconciled
and yet, time and time,
he returns, resolved.

More pecking, more reflection,
more of me quietly celebrating
the illusion of my own omnipotence.

In that bird's future, lies acceptance.
In mine, the slow realization,
the time-worn ruffling of my feathers.

Tick-Tock

It's not my fault.
Put the blame on time.
It decides who's buried
six feet below the gravestone.
Or who works the office jobs.
Or who cracks open a book
by a dim dormitory light at midnight.

It's always "the time is here."
Not on my say-so.
Not on yours.
Mothers only think they're having babies.
They grit their teeth, push hard,
but it's clocks that deliver.

Deaths, school, games, work,
marriages, divorces...
I've finally arrived
at my fiftieth birthday.
Only my watch knows
what took me so long.

Australian born poet and US resident since late Seventies, **John Grey** works as financial systems analyst. His poetry recently has been published in *Xavier Review*, *White Wall Review* and *Writer's Bloc* with work upcoming in *Poem*, *Prism International* and the *Cider Press Review*.

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