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THREE POEMS BY KELLEY RENO MILLER

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Putumayo

They had wounds worn open to let in the heavy air.
They had guacharos, night-haunting oilbirds, darting
in and out of the trees in search of fruit
They had muddy creeks splitting the crumpled forest
floor: not giving life, just breathing.
They had demons carved in stone for mothers.

They had everyone's eyes,
the sounds of noxious daylight
dripping from dark corners;
and miracles, daily things,
grinning with
the teeth of their ancestors.

They were thirsty for movement like any man, woman,
and held each other when the rain washed
the mountain down.
And hungry sorrow leads them sliding
into limber arms scarred by arrow tips
and curling, just so, around radiant space.

Symbiosis

I.
We became silence in the sun's slow arousal:
remain through the betrayal, even after the shadows
scald little threads across your back, deepen
the lines of your face.

You trace the lines woven across my belly,
fill in the barren years we've not spoken.

II.
And I busy your mouth so I can't tell you—I am going.
We are nameless in the irresolute morning,
when the echoes of night have fallen beyond the screen.

III.
You and I: we rape this stillness.

We mine it for the subtle words, beading like water on wax,
exploit the smothering stillness so that we may someday speak.

Telephones

And with his ring, I wave on the ghosts
who sit on the stoop of an old brownstone
waiting for you to stumble in, washed
with sweat and whiskey and haunted eyes.

I'll push away the nights now spent clutching
the phone: whispering to you, listening to him
breathe next to me. Through the shadows,
I find you standing on the corner near an

old bone church, coddling your guitar like a rifle.

We said we would meet in Prague, dance like
skeletons along the streets, clasping fingers
and watching the old women bake bread.
In this city of death, we would live together.

Yet with this ring, I'll pretend I can't see you
standing under the dead oak, etching my name
in the red clay just before it rains. Every song,
every word, stumbling over the next will be

silently calling from the streets of Prague.

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Kelley Reno Miller, originally from the Austin area, now attends the University of North Texas in Denton where she is completing her M.A. in Poetry and teaching freshman composition. She has been involved with several mixed/performing arts troupes in Houston and Austin, and now spends much of her time enacting safaris and car races with her four-year-old son.