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# Three Poems

*by George Moore*

## The Language of Heaven

Like rich wheat in western fields before a tornado mowing  
the impossible seeds into a fury of absolute airlessness,  
movement all in destruction and brilliance, carrying the day  
into its death at noon, clouds as curious as horses at barbwire  
approaching the wind with suspicion and gravity, with care  
separated from all other concerns but this, ripeness, absence,  
a falling into that same day, without settling, without sight,  
only the dust rolling itself into devils of wane belief,  
waiting the snap of the trees where there are trees  
and the particled stillness after.

A crowd watches in desperation as the house rises up  
into the mouth of the wind, not wind but a wild screaming  
tongue of black sky, anchored to each other as birds circle  
and are fed up into the stream of fingers at mad vibrato,  
and I stand there only among dead bits of barn and corrugated tin,  
dazed by the sudden fleshiness of my own weak tentacle of earth,  
ships of open land erupting into flames of dark air, ears  
pinned to the pressure of loves torn through by a scratch  
of nature, butterflies and bees in speckled patterns  
on the pavement at my feet.

You were among the remnants of timber, the pots and rags,  
guts of wood and fragmented enamel, singing the death song  
of some last bird, hawk, jay, transformed by the resulting fires  
into a sacrifice, the aftermath of all we ever thought to have  
twisted like nervous stalks, stripped clean like our commitment  
to that farm, its ears shattered and bled rich as disappearing  
dressings of soil, the animals anchored finally in fear in their  
last steps, sleeping beneath the weight of counties, unreachable  
with your hair in mimic of the seconds allotted for memory,  
and no one to recover from the sickness of first calm.

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## Echo Cliffs

Marble Canyon on the Paria Plateau,  
the Navajo sell their silver overlooking  
the great fall. The red desert of the Colorado  
at Lee's Ferry and Navajo Bridge.

True mongers come from the other side  
of the sun, where water is sacred

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even when the river gives up only mud.  
Hot shot down the canyon wall and across.

The descend Dantean for the literati  
but close and dry for the native hawks  
that spur a failing glottophagy. A hunger  
to devour all this landscape's language.

The harsh reality at this time of year  
and weather. But then the highway  
makes it aimless, and orange moving  
toward magenta. The traders catch a glint

as silver says more than a thousand  
storms, a mirroring of thirsty distances  
when we come back to cultivated sands  
surrounded with living echoes.

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## **Illuminati**

*For La Beata de Piedrahita*

there was a moment when she knew the irons of the Inquisition  
might reach her. There was the darkness these men perpetuated,  
she thought, and now I shall succumb. But among her patrons  
and believers, she prized the fearful and a few with power  
enough to keep her heresy from public eyes  
and to save her from the Tombs. But few knew  
she'd spoken with the Virgin, and this was enough, she felt,  
to secure her place wherever they might send her.

In Salamanca, in the household of her father,  
who left each morning in his bondage to the builders,  
labored for the Lord, in his way, by carrying stone  
for the Church, she would wake to the suddenness of twilight  
and not know if it were day at all, but perhaps some  
filtered moment of her own forthcoming. Still as  
the small house was with her father gone,  
it was a sentence she knew she must live with.  
She felt the worlds rub close together and nothing  
more for this one could be done.

It was not the forms of darkness, the *alumbrados*  
and their Gnostic sources, but those others, hidden  
for what must have seemed forever, who found  
in her voice the bridge to God's syllables, a light of itself  
splendiferous, congealing. She held council with the Lord  
they told their judges, and so would know the ends of these inquiries  
into the true faith. She would have given herself up  
to whatever forces, for they were small, and limited to  
the temporal. While others burned, and few, at the instant  
of the fire, would say more than that they corresponded,

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she reached for the light ambered in the flames.

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**George Moore** has published poems with *The Atlantic*, *Poetry*, *The Colorado Review*, *North American Review*, *Orion*, *The Queen's Quarterly*, *Dublin Quarterly*, *The Antigonish Review*, and elsewhere. Nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize last year, and twice for "Best of the Web," he has also been nominated this year for the *Rhysling Poetry Award*. His most recent collections include an e-book, *All Night Card Game in the Back Room of Time* (Pulpbits 2007) and *Headhunting* (Mellen, 2002). He has been a finalist for *The National Poetry Series*, *The Richard Synder Memorial Prize*, *The Brittingham Poetry Award*, and *The Anhinga Poetry Prize*. He teaches literature and writing with the University of Colorado, Boulder.