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Three Poems

by Stephen Leonard

Evolution

We were lucky enough, once,
To stand on the moon

Where only true believers see
The footprints from Abyssinia to Athens.

Aware, always, of the single cell that dared,
We did not fear running out of breath

Because we knew we had been born to run
With light racing through our eyes

Like life-seeking life in deep space
Following instinct all the way home.

And all the mother-fucking dream extinguishing homosauruses
Who roam the earth

Cannot destroy the evidence we left behind
The orbs that witnessed our steps.

For Chrissake

--for J.D.S. 1919-2010

Thirty years before I fell in love
With that version of me pressed
Across the pages of a paperback,
The oracle of the Next Generation
Turned New York on her head.

Leading gentiles into the faith
With that version of the Gospels
The canon dared anyone to confess:
Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Well said
To turn us on to what was already in our head.

276 occasions to feel sorry
for feeling sorry for myself
because he didn't go;
The awful truth is I remained
Exactly where you told me I would go.

To the Village Librarian

Mercy, what have we done?
You, whose hands pulled down the moon
Into this well-lit corner of shame.

With eyes capable of washing down the night sky's stars

After one spoonful of pure deceit.
Lord, what wouldn't we do?

And those lips that scorched the surface of the sun.
Heaven, is there any chance for us
While you skirt along in the face of mortals?

All night long we hear you singing round the trees
While your shadow dances barefoot on caravan walls
Reminding sin of the sweetness of sin.

Slowly, sleep kills off these voices saddled to the fog
Descending down the darkness at your command.
Merci, what more can I say?

Stephen Leonard, a Louisiana native, earned his B.A. from Gordon College in Massachusetts and his M.F.A. in creative writing from Goddard College in Vermont. His publication record includes a smattering of creative nonfiction, op-ed journalism and poetry found in publications ranging from Down East magazine to the very beloved SNReview. Currently, he has a novel-in-revision and a memoir in initial draft stage. He is a married father of four young children.

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