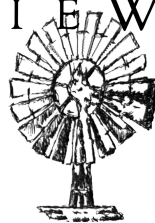


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## Drifting

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# Drifting

By Nan Byrne

On the bed my eyes closed  
I am letting drift take me  
I am remembering Mrs. Buffington  
She said Canader instead of Canada  
and told me once that Gillian Armistead  
was a less than brilliant girl  
And I am hearing my mother say,  
All rich people are happy because  
of the money have you ever noticed  
the sidewalks of Boston look like  
Brooklyn when the snow melts?  
That your dreams can turn you into a horse  
But only life can turn you into an ass  
Texas men like ten gallon hats  
and turquoise belts and Texas women  
wear mink coats over spandex  
but no one wears a girdle anymore  
or likes leftovers or knows what do  
with a panic-stricken canary or  
how to respond to the pause  
between words that white space  
the opacity where something else needs to be said  
something that you only know you're missing  
when those reticular fragments  
are floating past your eyes and you  
are trying to make some sense  
but all you can make are connections  
The garnishments of words are not images  
The rivers of the world are not the waters of the world

Evening shade is not night  
Childbirth is like a week with two Sundays  
And if I were a fork and not a knife I might be of use  
my father said before he cut and ran  
His pallbearers were all men of the cloth  
each one a preacher telling us the good news  
God we waited and waited for the epilogue  
but someone turned out the lights  
and sleep came softly