

## *Five Prose Poems*

Cole Swensen

### **An Orange**

A former sun, a warmer form of falling on, fallen now, warmly in grass, while the sun in your hand is a lonelier one, so you hold it more closely, and a light deep inside the body wanders back.

Or perhaps it's that, fallen in grass, the oranges glowing in the late slanted light return to an earlier state, just a watercolor wash of sun—or of scent—as when peeling an orange, the oil sprays out, covering your hands, and so you rub it in, and as you do, you notice that your mingled hands look not unlike an orange—a spherical body five or six inches in diameter and glowing.

When we pocket a sun, we pocket what will come and what will go on—and thus, on we go, with the early anatomists, thinking that the orange was made in the image of the brain. How time wanes when the mind strays.

## **Murmuration: Sky Tree Bird Triangulation**

Sky unraveling against bare trees—it's the trees' bare shapes that let the birds form their own sky and unskien. And then regain, a sigh in black weather, hover over and enter another sky behind the sky that's rowing by.

Or rather it's the trees, bare, that unravel, and into the sky, it's they that are flying, and in amazing shapes, they shape the sky and set it alight, exploding into birds, which are the sky's leaves, falling upward.

Or it's the bird storm—herd on—a riot of them, alive with time and in time, as they crowd into bare trees at night and set them, once again, alight.

## **Moths**

Moths gather at the window because we have light and that is what they eat—discretely, and in such small degrees that we never realize that our world is getting ever dimmer, while the moths themselves keep on getting slightly brighter. The time will come when, thanks to them, and to them alone, we'll be able to find our way through the growing gloom.

## **Kite**

In a gesture of solidarity with migrants in crisis, Ai Weiwei built a very large boat based on principles used to construct kites in ancient China—to *fly below*—with travelers therein—to *fly beyond*—what will not float—is the human heart—while hope—

A kite is, of course, also a raptor, with coloring often startling against a bright blue sky, and, in fact, it's the Milvus Kite that gave the name to the child's toy. Though it's not a toy, and it's not a child's—it's burning up in the open sun and yet remains in flight, which frightens the bird, who suddenly now also fears the sun. This is how owls are born.

## Speaking of Owls

An owl is always early, striking some as eerie, when it's really just an airiness of hour—as if the darker it gets, the more air there is—which makes its body more buoyant, which lets its wings beat harder, and at each beat, they beat yet more air into the dark, and thus the air in the hour continually grows until just before dawn, when it drops off sharply and settles as dew across lawns.

