

“It occurs to me I am right on the line / between heaven and earth”

The Bethlehem Gadfly Arts, the May 12, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts on the Arts in Bethlehem 

*“It occurs to me I am right on the line
between heaven and earth.”*

Cleveland Wall

With all of April’s usual National Poetry Month festivities cancelled, Cleveland decided to record a poem a day and post it to YouTube. The site of “Liminal I” is the “spirit field,” a grassy swath along Lehigh Street at the bottom of 7th Avenue.

https://youtu.be/AduuCd_qUUk

Liminal I

My lad and I take a short walk
to the bottom of the lane behind our house.
But the end of the lane is not the end.
Beyond lies a road, a swath of green,
a wild slope, and the railroad tracks.
Beyond the tracks: canal, towpath,
river, mountain; and beyond the mountain
are shops and a cinema we know
because we have been there. Our minds can see
a thousand miles in every direction.
We can see around corners.

The green swath is mown we know not
by whom. The wind makes a blunted sound
against our hoods, the sky
more pearly than leaden.
A keening comes from the brush
as of a baby crying, but as we approach
it fades and resurfaces farther on,
more like a goat’s voice. It strings us

along to the end of the field
where, through a break in the bracken,
we see a truck beside the tracks below,
the complaint of its engine borne up
on gusts of wind which bend its shape.

The lad lies down on thick-thatched grass
and bids me do the same, which needs
a quelling of the grown-up injunction
to remain always upright in public.
When I lie down, it is quiet. The wind
rushes smooth, unimpeded over me.
The blank white sky develops
subtleties of grey, a visible depth.
Unseen geese honk; smaller birds fly over.
It occurs to me I am right on the line
between heaven and earth.

Then I see sparks flitting in the air,
bright on bright like angels escaped
from the head of a pin, and I wonder
if I could be seeing into another plane
in which these busy sparks are darting
all the while, unseen by mind or eye.
I tell myself it is my vision tripping
on a surfeit of light. But my son
sees the same sparks and has no doubt.

*Cleveland Wall is a poet and teaching artist in Bethlehem. She performs with poetry guitar duo [The Starry Eyes](#) and co-hosts [Tuesday Muse](#), a performance and open-mic series at The Ice House on 2nd Tuesdays, currently meeting via Zoom. Her book *Let X = X* was published by [Aldrich Press](#), 2019.*

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