

Ursine Dreams

By Steve Brightman

With a tiny
exhale and
a thin flick of
a wrist,
the latticework
between the fish
and the stars
was let loose
upon the world.

She ran her hand
counter-clockwise
across the
food supply
and breathed life
into the bears,
letting them
set foot on
solid ground
for the first time,
freeing them from
their constellations,
freeing them from
the eternity of their
ursine dreams.

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Of Copper and Sunlight

By Steve Brightman

Kandinsky's
tossing pennies
against the
base of the wall
on the east
side of heaven.

The collar of
his coat turns
upward, and
a hand-rolled
cigarette
sits lit in his
non-tossing
hand.

He's in a
back alley,
waiting on a
sunrise.
Any sunrise
will do, really.
Every once in
a great while,
he just needs
to see the power
of copper and
sunlight
and maybe
a glint of life.

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The Axis of Why

By Steve Brightman

It started
deep within
his genetics
in places
that weren't
named yet.
In places
where ideas
began
at the most
elemental
level and
in places
where predators
thrive on
the dark and
tentative irons
in the blood.

The rumble
continued down
his jungle spine,
picking and
choosing
what to
chew and
where to
sleep.

Night is
coming early
now and
he doesn't
understand
the axis of
why,
he only knows
that he is
hungry and
you are
close.

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Inch Forward the Itch

By Steve Brightman

Last night was a restless night.
It hung there shivering and alone,
huddled against the window.
Unlocked door and cool pane
served as a makeshift confessional
and I wailed my sins to the frost
in the backyard and I unveiled
my transgressions to
the dark and hungry sky.

God was in the dead spot of
the floorboards and restless hymnals
were raised not toward the heavens,
but parallel to the foundation.

Window cracked open to let the sky
through to inch forward the itch
of swollen sin and to curl the furrow of
bed sheets in her absence.

I fell to arthritic knees,
watching tears pool on
the dirty linoleum and saw them
gradually flow to level ground,
next to ant carcasses and spent
fingernail clippings that didn't
quite hit the trash can.

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White Is White

By Steve Brightman

I've long felt
that odes are for
the uninspired who
have to pin and mount
a topic on a
collection board.
I hesitate to
throw this to
the world as an ode,
but I've no other way
to present this.

This is my ode
to the albino deer
that wasn't an albino.
This is my ode
to the white deer
that that I should have
hit with my
black car last night.
Not "should have"
as in missed
opportunity,
"should have"
as in still not sure
how it didn't happen.

I know your
bright white fur
was probably
only matted snow
from the storm
or the halogen shock
of my headlights
as I rounded
the pale corner,
but white is white
and dead is dead
and you are
neither tonight.

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