

Ambush

The chair leapt up
and hit me in the face,
followed by the floor.

I didn't know they
were aggrieved or
had it in for me.

The shoelace,
I discovered,
was in on it too.

Lying here, I see
they had just been
biding their time.

– John R. Yost

Who

A great horned owl roosts in the fir tree
near our house, a winter goblin
cloaked in evergreen.

Nightly he intones his oboe solo
and poses a riddle,
“*Who-who, who?*”

The darkness does not answer.
Then ghost wings unfurl
and he is gone.

I too ask *Who*. Answers don’t come.
The question remains.
I long for wings

– John R. Yost

Williamson, WV

Coal is my town's life blood, hauled
in massive hoppers that navigate a
spiderweb of rails running north
from our mines to factories in Detroit,
Pittsburgh, and Bethlehem, where
the cars are unloaded and returned.

The trainyard is seven steps from
my back door. Dozens of rail lines
converge and weave into a ferrous
tapestry flung over fertile river soil,
laminated by a film of gray dust.

Locomotives idle in the trainyard
throughout the night, an iron
orchestra that hammers earthquake
music. We who live near the tracks
sleep through the diesel-powered
lullaby as through a thunderstorm,
serenely rocked by coal.

– John R. Yost

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