
POETRY | FALL 2019

Brooching

By Chase McMurren

I biked uphill, breathing fast,
past her seniors' apartment building

Remembering how her body stiffened
at the sight of my ornate owl brooch,
somehow seen through cataracts and cigarette smoke.

Only later did I learn that the owl is a death omen.

This lady, late in life, looked out at her balcony
recalling the bird of prey
who showed up shortly before her husband dropped dead.

She didn't end up dying that day.
I think she weathered another winter,
Scootering downhill on cigarette runs.

Chase Everett McMurren, MD, is a queer, Métis physician with an interest in supporting healthy living and dying. He is the physician lead for the home visiting program at Taddle Creek Family Health Team where he provides care-at-home for long-living elders who are homebound due to their infirmities. Dr. McMurren, an assessor and clinical supervisor for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and a Lecturer in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto, is also a psychotherapist and the medical director of the Al and Malka Green Artists' Health Centre at Toronto Western Hospital. With a focus on nourishment, Dr. McMurren is currently studying music thanatology (playing the harp as a mode of healing), and training as a Medicine Man.

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