

## Poems by Simon Perchik

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Now that it's raining you can forget  
--let gravity do the work  
and this rake, half bare, half

at attention through the circle  
that holds the Earth in place  
clearing the path the dead remember

though these leaves must be wet  
cascading past savanna to savanna  
as primordial headwaters spreading out

so many years apart and always  
there's room for more dead  
whose million year old cry

will sound the same a million years  
from this tree calling, calling, sleepless  
--you don't need to find out

--it's enough when it rains  
you can lean down and grasp hand over hand  
without caring why or holding back.

\*

Here, there, the way silence  
tows you below the waterline  
and though you are alone

you're not sure where her name  
is floating on the surface  
or what's left

grasped by a single wave  
that never makes it to shore  
splashes as if this pen

is rowing you across the stillness  
the dead are born with  
--you are already bathing, half

from memory, half by leaping  
from the water for flowers  
growing everywhere --for you

this page, unclaimed :a knife  
dripping with seawater  
and your throat.

\*

Even grief is passing you by  
though you waited in the open  
had a fondness for calendars

--dozens! drying  
the way ocean nets are dragged  
behind the day after day

who no longer ask but come  
for the silence snapping them up  
to be picked clean in a room

opening everywhere as seawater  
or is it already Spring  
impatient, wants the bed empty

and though you don't move an inch  
the flowers are generous  
never in the way, come and go

with trust in their eyes  
--rage is helpless here  
has to listen for a change

how warm the dirt is  
and under your tongue  
more rain, how easy it was.

\*

A single wave and the brush  
has no room left  
turns away the paint  
already on its side  
convinced it would give birth  
has a place to go though you  
were already used to breathing underwater.

One is an enormous number  
crowds into this hallway  
where the bulb happens to be dead  
--with one stroke  
and the still wet gloss  
takes you by the hands  
caresses them into boards  
no longer separated from the others

--doesn't move  
when you bring flowers home.

\*

The same dingy elevator  
not in service  
though to wish is the easy part  
--once its doors are sealed  
the gust likes it in the back  
and you make good time  
cut the sky in half :both doors  
opening the way your foot  
fell suddenly between

--you stumbled in front a butterfly  
that no longer moves, its wings  
folded over, changing again  
into an evening spread out  
from the bottom up  
reaching across a road  
that stays dark more than the others  
lifts its dirt to your shoulders  
and along the helpless buttons  
lets it fall, bathing you  
floor by floor, any day now.

**Simon Perchik** is an attorney whose poems have appeared in *Partisan Review*, *The Nation*, *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, and elsewhere. His latest collection *Almost Rain* was published by River Otter Press (2013). For more information, please visit his website at <http://www.simonperchik.com>.