

“Something to Love”

Raphael Kosek, Dutchess County Poet Laureate

“Give me time enough in this place
And I will surely make a beautiful thing.”

-Annie Dillard, “Mornings Like This”

When the artist touches brush to canvas, or the poet puts
words to paper, she is committing an act of hope,
she is reaching out to another, declaring
I am here, in this place, here is my story,
perhaps you will find a piece of you in it
so there must be something to love here—maybe

the river my father swam across from Beacon to Newburgh
as a boy, arm over arm, slicing the water, bent
on a navigable future, not coming home
until twilight when the waves grew chill.

Could it be my mother’s story of Eleanor Roosevelt
laughing at the rooster who chased her
at my grandparents’ Dutchess Tea Room
when she stopped on her way to Hyde Park—
a woman who was above all, approachable,
shoring up spirits during the Great Depression?

Was it the excitement I felt as a child unearthing
an ancient horse shoe
from our backyard which was once a field
where Washington’s troops raced their horses
while the nascent nation struggled into being?

Surely there is something to love here—
the heft and promise of that history
combined with my own personal thread
of falling unflinchingly in love
with the sky that bends over us, reeling out
its breathless mural, the river with its deep
promise of distance even if I don’t go very far,
and the bluebirds right outside my window
balancing on the winter suet cakes—
I can never believe how blue they really are.