Helicon West & The USU Writing Center Present:

Like Chicken Feed
by Joshua McDermott

I'm alone on the farm most days.
I strip down to my underwear and stand waist deep in the canal.

I can't force myself to speak.
I'm tired of the things I say when meeting someone new.

I take baths and use bar soap.
I eat fresh brown eggs and dress the cat's wounded leg.

Popularity or the sunset?
I can dry watching the sky turn yellow, pink, red.

I've had others and they've had me.
I watched them slide through my hands like chicken feed.

Loneliness is yours.
Not mine.
I'm more comfortable watching deer.

Microburst
by Joseph Bradbury

Just off the front porch sagebrush shakes in the wind.
The moon reeks like a cold, white stone in a dark river; constel-
lations settle on the ink-black sky. A bare light bulb sways in a
current of air, throwing my shadow on the desert floor, my
shape gliding over sand and brush, the sandstone boulders obs-
scured by the night.

Heavy clouds corral like horses beneath a brilliantly
lit mesa. Mary steps onto the porch, the screen door crashes
behind her.

“Storm comin,'” she wipes her hands with a rag, “I
ain't leavin' the light out again just to get broke.” She un-
screws the bulb and is gone. Black on pitch black.

Suddenly, the sky erupts in water and sound, ridge-
line heralded under spires of white. A torrent of water fills dry
riverbeds. Mud spills over limestone ridges; gully-walls break
off in chunks to join the silt and rush, desert a rage of wind
and wet sand.

A tin bucket brims with rainwater at the foot of
the wooden porch. The wood splits where water has satu-
rated and expanded under the desert sun.

Once, when Mary and I had the horses out, rain
came quickly and pelted our skin. It took the two of us,
boots slipping in the thick mud, to close the barn door.
We laughed and kissed on the old porch, a gale blew my
hat high on my head. Then, like tonight, rain brimmed
over the tin pail. She looked over her shoulder at the
spilling water.

“When do you think gathering rain becomes a
bucket of water?”

I looked at the cobalt and vermilion sky, veins of
runoff winding through the valley, “I'd say about the
same time runoff becomes a river.”

Helicon West invites you to open mic nights every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at Citrus & Sage, 130 N, 100 E, Logan, UT
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