

concern of late. Days are short. A full moon illuminates our suppers, casting a cold, hard light on your forehead, giving your face the appearance of dried bark, warming us through the night. So large and bright a moon the mornings are grey by contrast. My hunger grows. I feast you: love me.

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POETRY / DEN BOER, HANSON, DOW, OPPEN,  
MARKS, ORLEN, ST. JOHN, WITT, STEWART,  
SHAPIRO, SWIFT

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### Storm / James Den Boer

It is just after the New Year;  
we are in the third day of a storm  
from the west, from the Pacific,  
and the eucalyptus roar louder  
than the surf. The slough fills,  
the herons standing deeper  
and deeper, to their locked knees.

Hollow jointed reeds rattle.

I haven't seen a bird flying today.  
They are all huddling, fluffed feathers  
under the eaves, against cold brick.

Even the telephone whines  
and crackles; voices in the wind.

Sometimes the air is so full  
of voices, so loud with power  
and the sound of the great throat  
of the world, its huge rushing  
pitched exactly to the clash  
in my mind, the tremendous whisper  
that continues in my head,  
that I feel I am only well  
in a storm, only a part  
of the world when together  
we roar and batter toward  
some reluctance, some peace.

We are released. Storms end  
against the mountains and the sea  
settles to sparkle in the sun.

But, in the warm following breeze  
and light slip of jacaranda blossoms  
along our street, among the steady  
thrusting of new shoots and tendrils  
answering the winter rain, I go on,  
still not still, still lashed,  
still listening within  
to the interminable muttering.

I bow my head and lean into the wind.

## Up Bear Creek Canyon / James Den Boer

Out at dawn again, after the storm—  
why do I wake so early?—  
the creeks are rushing and turning  
the clicking rocks in their beds.

I walk the fire road,  
across the three canyons  
which divide our ranch,  
away from the creeks' mumbling,  
toward the old stillness  
of high ground, toward sacred  
still places in the stands  
of bay laurel, where ferns are cut  
by thin hooves of small deer.

Deep in Bear Creek Canyon,  
where the laurel's sharp leaves  
drift around my boots, I hear  
the tiny mew and snarl  
of cougar kits playing in sage  
a hundred yards above me—  
they are hunting each other,  
shaking drops from the wet branches,  
rushing from ambush.

The mother, small, brown-gold,  
a touch of white and black  
at her throat, stills them,  
and takes a few steps down  
the slope, looking for me.