

EPISTLE TO ANNE CARSON

by William Doreski

Open boat in this weather? Old gym socks drape the pines. Melodies shaped like telephone conversations bubble over. Out here on the lake, the chop the color of sardines, we observe each other so closely our eyes touch and threaten to adhere. As we turn away to face opposite shores, a clap of one hand pretends to be thunder. We aren't fooled. The crisis will come later, when we row to Noel's dock in hopes of a cocktail party with the neighbors apologizing for voting Republican. The dogs will refrain from barking but will give us that look. You know the one: glass-eyed but crazy with intelligence. If people blush at birth and death, what does that say about the residue adrift in the great between? As you row I drag a hand in the water. It's so cold it fondles like a greeting from the grave. Someone called the sea a grave. Marianne Moore, of course. But this modest lake poured between two wooded ridge lines lacks the epic grandeur to which the sea always aspires and usually achieves. If you row harder and faster we'll dock right at sunset, insofar as the gabardine sky allows us to imagine it. Already I can taste my gin and tonic, colder even than the lake, and deeper, much deeper, with strangers like us drowned in the depth

EPISTLE TO BOB DYLAN

by William Doreski

Stuck inside the bluest eye. Glass shatters, but the cops won't respond. The railroad shivers like a zipper unzipped in a parked car. How can anyone be so desperate? A freight train stumbles along, every second car derailing. I want to stop this unraveling, but despite the lack of law enforcement I'm under arrest. Who has witnessed my crimes? Who has signed a statement literate enough to convict me? The bluest eye winks. Who stands behind that weary flirtation? Who has the courage to blame me for her favorite sins? The end nears. It bears the snout of a '49 Chrysler. No rust, only a sheen of paste wax tough as exegesis.

Let's do everything twice. Two blue eyes, each bluer than the other. A double-tracked railroad with competing trains travelling in both directions at once. The cops agree to release me to oversee my reincarnation as the famous painter who died in Tahiti more than a century ago. Flat planes of color. Naked people sprawled on the beach as the tsunami approaches. Maybe I'll run for office. Maybe I'll volunteer to serve on the Nobel Prize committee, where I'll vote only for creation science, voodoo economics, and literature shaped like zeppelins. No one will contradict me, but the stink of gin will soil the process, confirming that the bluest eye went blind in childhood, leaving a whisper of ash.

William Doreski's most recent book is *The Suburbs of Atlantis* (2013). His poetry, fiction, and reviews have appeared in many journals. He lives in Peterborough, NH.