

***Ace Boggess***

**The Value of Poetry**

Little spider escaping from under the closet door &  
sprinting across the desert of beige carpet  
to the vast, enchanted wilderness beneath my bed

must, somewhere in the arachnid unconscious,  
know it is exposed for a distance, prey  
to whatever razor-beaked raptors circle

below the milky sky of my ceiling.  
At any moment, its eight pumping pistons  
might be ripped from the ground

by the opossum playing possum near the nightstand.  
Surely this wasteland is overrun by lizards, frogs, &  
wasps this knight errant prefers not to fight. Yet,

with all its eyes, it fails to notice me,  
a lazy god looming, shoeless,  
nestled in a nest of pillows & reading a book of poems

I soon will add to the free library down the street,  
a smudge like a thumbprint on the back cover  
awkwardly visible next to the author's face.

### **Yesterday's Spider**

dropped from the lip  
of the garage door  
after it opened —  
a reddish-brown stain  
as if a single bead  
of blood splashed  
against an invisible wall &  
dried. I would've  
walked right into it  
had the sun not offered  
backlighting  
as to a singer on stage  
the moment before  
the song takes a darker turn.  
There would've been  
screaming, would've been  
icy paralysis  
I otherwise feel  
in crowds where strangers  
have yet to say hello,  
laugh at my jokes,  
or drink. I can't say  
the spider intended  
any harm, although  
its timing was suspicious  
as it leapt from shadow  
like an assassin  
with a knife  
between his teeth.  
I noticed in time &  
exited with my life,  
trembling a little  
as if struck by  
a sudden wind.

## Visualizer

Remember when this was the *in* thing to launch  
while songs shuffled on the desktop computer?

Patterns flared outward like supernovae,  
lines in all directions building new stars,

circles expanding, triangles, squares.  
Colors shifted to accommodate mood:

blue or purple to denote the minor key  
of a sad ballad, reddish orange for rage

of rock & roll. A simulation of synesthesia,  
effortless & exact, the code

seemed to recognize differences  
between a bopping, happy jam-band tune

by the Grateful Dead or Rusted Root &  
the fist-pumping heartbeat of Judas

Priest's heavy metal, even fuzzing  
to crowd noise on a live track

before ticking to center to start again  
or rolling across the screen in a wave.

I could lounge in my desk chair &  
watch for hours, Of course, I was high

all the time on Percocet, coke, or sleeping pills  
that never helped me sleep, each of these

adding a private sense of transcendence  
to a sequence of hallucinations.

Music for the eyes, it felt as though  
the coders jammed along, their ones & zeroes

Ace Boggess

flutes & oboes played off-stage,  
absent but somehow part of the performance,

deities who preferred their hands be visible  
in every nuanced aspect of the world.