Ecology

By Jack Collom

Surrounded by bone, surrounded by cells,  
by rings, by rings of hell, by hair, surrounded by  
air-is-a-thing, surrounded by silhouette, by honey-wet bees, yet  
by skeletons of trees, surrounded by actual, yes, for practical  
purposes, people, surrounded by surreal  
popcorn, surrounded by the reborn: Surrender in the center  
to surroundings. O surrender forever, never  
end her, let her blend around, surrender to the surroundings that  
surround the tender endo-surrender, that  
tumble through the tumbling to that blue that  
curls around the crumbling, to that, the blue that  
rumbles under the sun bounding the pearl that  
we walk on, talk on; we can chalk that  
up to experience, sensing the brown here that’s  
blue now, a drop of water surrounding a cow that’s  
black & white, the warbling Blackburnian twitter that’s  
machining midnight orange in the light that’s  
glittering in the light green visible wind. That’s  
the ticket to the tunnel through the thicket that’s  
a cricket’s funnel of music to correct & pick it out  
from under the wing that whirls up over & out.


Jack Collom was born in Chicago. He joined the US Air Force and was posted in Libya and Germany before returning to the United States. He earned a BA in forestry and English and an MA in English literature from the University of Colorado. Collom’s poetry takes its genesis from everyday happenings, activities, and observations; his book on writing for and by children, Poetry Everywhere (1994), reflects this outlook. His poems for adults are often grounded in the details of the natural world, and he has been described as an ecological poet.

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