

Cultural Daily

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Edward Field: "Icarus"

Edward Field · Thursday, October 27th, 2016

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Edward Field is the recipient of the W.H. Auden award, the Bill Whitehead lifetime achievement award, the Lambda Literary Award, and is the author of ten books of poetry, including *After The Fall: poems old and new*, in which can be found his poem, "Mae West," published by University of Pittsburgh Press, © 2007.

Icarus

Only the feathers floating around the hat
 Showed that anything more spectacular had occurred
 Than the usual drowning. The police preferred to ignore
 The confusing aspects of the case,
 And the witnesses ran off to a gang war.
 So the report filed and forgotten in the archives read simply
 "Drowned," but it was wrong: Icarus
 Had swum away, coming at last to the city
 Where he rented a house and tended the garden.

"That nice Mr. Hicks" the neighbors called,
 Never dreaming that the gray, respectable suit
 Concealed arms that had controlled huge wings
 Nor that those sad, defeated eyes had once
 Compelled the sun. And had he told them
 They would have answered with a shocked,
 uncomprehending stare.
 No, he could not disturb their neat front yards;
 Yet all his books insisted that this was a horrible mistake:

What was he doing aging in a suburb?
Can the genius of the hero fall
To the middling stature of the merely talented?

And nightly Icarus probes his wound
And daily in his workshop, curtains carefully drawn,
Constructs small wings and tries to fly
To the lighting fixture on the ceiling:
Fails every time and hates himself for trying.
He had thought himself a hero, had acted heroically,
And dreamt of his fall, the tragic fall of the hero;
But now rides commuter trains,

Serves on various committees,
And wishes he had drowned.

This entry was posted on Thursday, October 27th, 2016 at 12:58 pm and is filed under [Poetry](#)
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