

Three Poems by Jason Wee

from "Six Ways to Meet in a Cul-de-sac"

II

If I met you alone in a dead-end street,
would you brandish your tool while I ask
if that's a hatchet or are you happy to see me?
You might reply you have an axe to grind
to which I'd ask if, touching some wood,
I could help you bury that hatchet instead.
You don't have the handle on things, you say,
and with the camera on my eyes I twinkle,
true Sir, not yet. There were no more words
when we make your end and my end meet
as you taught me a lesson in hatchet and
other jobs, to the point where I cannot see past
your wood for the trees and the director yells
cut, backs patted, cracks wiser, we put away
the livery and dressed for home, where
we'd edit Xtube's next upload "Carl did Zack".

from "Grimm Tales"

II

A princess with eleven brothers
working nights as a seamstress.
Her siblings, birds of a certain feather,
quit the island, afoul of the law
on flocking against nature.
To leave or not, when welcomed
as ducklings at home but swans abroad.
Now, her brothers toss back shots
to the pulse of strobe lights. In the day
they are pale and silent as crows.
So she eats and sews alone.
One day, she thinks, they'll ask
for my shirts, one day they'll tire
of dancing like kings in lands far far away.

from "Unreliable Evidence"

1991

Given enough time I can forget anything,
the most recent and the smallest
first, which pocket my pen was in

or if it's never been, my travel umbrella.
Slowly the older moves into the indifferent dark.
The way to my studio in the four-room flat,

the library I first read Borges in,
the buses to my parents' home,
one lost memory begets another and by the hour

I'd forgotten anniversaries, the years
in school spent learning numbers and names,
the schools, my name, and who you are.

My mind reshaped, without ridges and
perturbations, smooth as a leveled hill.
I can forget that I had forgotten,

which is to say I can remember anything
you might want me to.
Only the grass before the condo rose,

a clear field and not old stones.
The highway has always been there.
Only this country and not the country before.

The names you say turned out
to be all the names I know.
As for the rest, I think of the ash

that falls in the dry season.
Though char-black and tastes of smoke,
if you say it's snow, it's snow.