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Three Poems of Survival

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Three poems from Survive and Thrive Writing Workshop #1 in 2015 written and submitted by Larry J. Matthews

WHAT I WANT
TATTOO
FEAR
WHAT I WANT

I don’t want that title
I want you back

All those years of living
and crying and scratching
and balancing
and trying to love

Then discovering ourselves
and each other four decades in

I want you back
with your lips soft and moist
with your tongue ready to snap
at dumb things I say all too often

I want you back
with bright eyes and clear mind
But I know
I can’t have what I want

“Widower”
There I uttered it
Only a whisper
but saying it must make it so
TATTOO

My body is all do-it-yourself. 
Years digging creases 
into my face. 
Painting brown spots, 
sagging skin, dry deserts, and more. 
Time has finally come to hire an exterior decorator.

I’ve chosen an eye to adorn. 
No gender, no symbol of wealth. 
Just something to see what is real.

I want to see 
what is true beauty and what might be false, 
the difference between discipline and abuse, 
the nature of fear and the souls of people who sell it, 
what is worth valuing and what is not, 
where a child loses hope and what causes it.

And I wish to show people what 
insight I gain from this eye. 
So let’s add a tear, 
to let others know how much it hurts to see what is real.
FEAR

I suspect there will be a day
When time stops for me

It might be something like
Punishment as a youngster
When forced to sit on a chair
For the three minutes it takes
Sand to pass through an egg timer

Or it may be like the distance
Between meeting your lover
At a party and later
Feeling your naked bodies touch
An agonizingly long way to go

Or the end of time could be like
Going to sleep only without the dreams

But I don’t fear the end of time
What I really fear is
When I have a wondrous idea
For a story or poem
That arrives in the space between
Waking and sleeping
I fear I will lose that idea
In the fog of slumber
And never find it again