

Poem by C.D. Wright

Because We Have Been Here Before

It is imagined that all of the world bears our mark, holds our form, and that the land is reminiscent in detail of all that ever came of its issue, was built on its foundation.

What is not in blinding color becomes progressively obscured in shadow.

A bottle rolled to the foot of the hill glinting against the rock that stopped it.

An eruption of silence in the hottest part of day.

The tree was here then, but we have no pictures, no reports, nor is there any score in the bark to show what it might have endured.

It grew quickly and rose to the dormers of the third floor where shots were directed into a shower stall.

A collection of arrowheads taken to a hock shop.

Clapboards, splendid cattails at the swimming hole, and a motel named Capri.

Maunderers and liars, fry cooks and local historians.

Story of a probable patricide. Taverns of long hours and bad pay.

The king snake that lived under her porch.

A closet of [a suspect's] costumes.

Every place will yield its own tragedies and its own efforts to overcome its past.

An animal running into the woods causing all others to halt.

The yew is perhaps the first of its kind on this continent.

There is an obsolete word, *meuse*, which referred to the form of an animal left by its lying, particularly a hare and other creatures of sport.

C.D. Wright, a Fellow of the American Academy since 2005, is I. J. Kapstein Professor of English at Brown University. She has published numerous volumes of poetry, including "Deepstep Come Shining" (1998), "One Big Self: Prisoners of Louisiana" (with photographer Deborah Luster, 2003), "Steal Away: New and Selected Poems" (2002), "Cooling Time: An American Poetry Vigil" (2005), and "Like Something Flying Backwards" (2007). "Rising, Falling, Hovering" will be released this spring.

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