

Chris Agee

The Rainbow Poem

Well, when we finally came back again, there
it was: *the cypress absence*, ramifying. But some days
later, something else happened: a rainbow arcing
over Brdo and our now-solo cypress, for
the first time ever (for us). As if clarifying
the beauties of absence. Like the one
in “The Village” the afternoon of Miriam’s death
when hailstones darkened our windshield for good.

The Cypress Poem

Yes, we lost that second cypress to the saw

of an idiot neighbour: an immense squarish one,

paired with ours

like an old couple reaching across an untended wall.

But soon enough

I saw three other smaller cypress above another neighbour's

stone-roofed shed, like slim arrowheads or svelte swords

I had never thought about or dwelt upon. A lesson in itself:

vistas of incremental change after a great clean-cut change.

The Dove Poem

Because we were late, or later, neither
 the golden oriole nor the blue-fronted jays, almond-seeking,
 came this year – but something else did
 come: the beautiful doves, in a heart-flutter
 and flurry of purple grey and white insignia flashing
 in flocks over rooftops under gloomy cloud...
 Lesson? *Listen*: It's Vojka's oft-times
Always expect the unexpected. Like the small
 perfect cat that walked into the night – and never
 came back. Or this, the poem.

Chris Agee is a poet, essayist, photographer and editor. He was born in San Francisco on a US Navy hospital ship and grew up in Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island. After high school at Phillips Academy Andover and a year in Aix-en-Provence, France, he attended Harvard University and since graduation has lived in Ireland. His third collection of poems, *Next to Nothing* (Salt, 2008), was shortlisted in Britain for the 2009 Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry, and its sequel, *Blue Sandbar Moon* (The Irish Pages Press), appeared in 2018. He is the Editor of *Irish Pages*, and edited *Balkan Essays* (The Irish Pages Press, 2016), the sixth volume of Hubert Butler's essays, published simultaneously in Croatian by the Zagreb publishing house Fraktura. His new poetic work, *Trump Rant* (The Irish Pages Press, 2021), has just been published. He lives in Belfast, and divides his time between Ireland, Scotland and Croatia.