

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Mark Wunderlich**

**- poems -**

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## Difficult Body

A story: There was a cow in the road, struck by a semi--  
half-moon of carcass and jutting legs, eyes  
already milky with dust and snow, rolled upward

as if tired of this world tilted on its side.  
We drove through the pink light of the police cruiser,  
her broken flank blowing steam in the air.

Minutes later, a deer sprang onto the road  
and we hit her, crushed her pelvis--the drama reversed,  
first consequence, then action--but the doe,

not dead, pulled herself with front legs  
into the ditch. My father went to her, stunned her  
with a tire iron before cutting her throat, and today I think

of the body of St. Francis in the Arizona desert,  
carved from wood and laid in his casket,  
lovingly dressed in red and white satin

covered in petitions--medals, locks of hair,  
photos of infants, his head lifted and stroked,  
the grain of his brow kissed by the penitent.

O wooden saint, dry body. I will not be like you,  
carapace. A chalky shell scooped of its life.  
I will leave less than this behind me.

Mark Wunderlich

## **The Bruise Of This**

The night I woke to find the sheets wet from you,  
like a man cast up on the beach,  
I hurried you off to the shower to cool you down,

dressed you, the garments strict and awkward in my hands,  
and got you into a taxi to the hospital,  
the driver eyeing us from his rearview mirror--

The blue tone of the paging bell,  
the green smocks, metal beds,  
plastic chairs linked

in a childhood diagram of infection,  
and when they wheeled you by  
there was a needle in your arm,

the bruise of this  
already showing itself,  
and rather than watch gloved doctors handle you

in their startling white coats and loose ties,  
I took a seat outside and waited,  
time yawning, thick and static--

and made clear to me in the bright light of speculation  
was time's obstacle in the body,  
and those things I could do that might cushion it.

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