

Jean Pearson

A WISCONSIN SHAMAN

A deer poised in shadow  
at the edge of a stage,  
a stag, head raised, alert,  
he unfolds his legs and  
ambles to the microphone.  
It is a rainy night in Camden.  
The poet's familiar name  
is Antler. In the light I hear  
a bearded man-creature begin  
his vision singing.  
Voice follows the sure step  
of words. And I am not the only one  
returning to wildness.

I have been holding a forest  
and city together with aching  
hands and now I let it go,  
sit back and laugh. This  
genuine self chants a binding spell.  
The required shape of life,  
the double realm, is here.  
What had been feels again,  
his body gone transparent  
to bring it back  
from the silent ground.

Next day there is sun.  
I follow Antler to visit Whitman's  
grave. From the soil that covers  
the granite Whitman family tomb,  
most likely filtered through  
on his way into the future,  
Antler scoops a glad bag full  
of earth. I gather three stones  
and an acorn cap at the same spot,  
a few more relics  
for my shelf with the pine cones  
from Walden Pond.

On the way out,  
a large branch blocks our cars  
from leaving the cemetery.  
Moving aside that antler shed  
by some other life, he looks back  
and smiles, gathering me with his eyes.  
I remember how lightly he left then.  
Instead of good-bye he said:  
I will see you again.  
And I am inclined to believe  
that certain men know ways  
to alter even the unrelenting  
passages of space and time.



John C. Pine

BLOCK ISLAND

*The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early  
and stopt for me,  
I tuck'd my trowser-ends in my boots and went  
and had a good time;  
You should have been with us that day  
round the chowder-kettle.*

Walt Whitman

My sister and her husband live  
On Block Island in a house they built themselves  
On two fertile acres off Beacon Hill Road.  
There blackberries grow abundantly in August,  
And tourists from Boston and Providence  
Gorge themselves on the succulent fruit.  
In winter my sister's kids go skating  
On their own private pond. No tourists then!