

Summer Aubade

by [R. Gerry Fabian](#) (September 2024)



Summer Night #2 (Willard Metcalf, 1914)

Summer Aubade

hammocked in your arms
we fade into summer's

constellations
displayed for us
until dawn erases the stars.

Pure Cod Liver Oil

During those
sweltering suburban summers
when giant exhaust fans
and refrigerated hand towels
offer only pretend relief,
my parents sent me
my maternal grandparents' home
on Long Beach Island.

My grandmother, Irene,
a white-haired octogenarian,
with very shaky hands
insisted that every morning begin
with a spoonful of cod liver oil.

We assembled by the kitchen sink.
She took her spoonful first,
then my cranky grandfather
and finally, it was my turn.
It was no sooner in my mouth
then I spit it in the sink.

"Now you know the flavor
and still have to take another spoonful."

Her hand shook as she poured another spoonful
and put it in my mouth.
She was a scary old lady so I swallowed it.

Placing the spoon in the sink,
she pulled my head to her face.
“Sometimes the best thing for you
may seem the most unpleasant.
It is never too early
to learn this lesson.”
Then she smiled and kissed my forehead.

Leaving Summer Behind

I move outside with slow steps of trepidation.
The hoarfrost is losing the sun battle
as the shade sanctuary dissolves.
Like a torrid romance that finally needs space,
I take a calculated, cautious breath
and exhale that white, wet air.
The humidity like a nagging great aunt
has departed without any more complaints.
My arms prickle in the breeze gusts
and my bones reacquaint with this pseudo-cold
and try to shiver-shake me back inside.
I zip my jacket up to my bare neck
rub my hands together in friction warmth
and glance at the size of the wood pile.

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R. Gerry Fabian is a published writer and poet from Doylestown, PA. He has published five books of poetry: *Parallels*, *Coming Out Of The Atlantic*, *Electronic Forecasts*, *Wildflower Women*, as well as his poetry baseball book, *Ball On*

The Mound.

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