

# Two Poems

by [Peter Lopatin](#) (July 2020)



## See

Tell me only what you see, without  
interpretation. Can you do it?

Look, there, where meadow  
angles down to creek, and  
the greenery becomes  
the kind that likes wet ground.

Go there for me while the  
light still falls just as you see it  
on the willow's hanging, western  
arms. Go there, and tell me only  
what you see.

Or, if it suits you best, go, some  
late October afternoon, to the city's  
northern edge where a road you've never  
seen decays to gravel. Allow your eyes their  
liberty and see tire-ruts filled with water like

a ship's bilge, tinged with  
gasoline rainbows from passing cars.

But if you're strong enough, you can  
stay in place and release your eyes  
from their accumulated obligations,  
and in that state, I'm told, if you see  
one face and give no thought to thought,  
you'll see every face that has ever been  
or can ever be.

If I could see all this myself, I would.  
But my sight is bound to  
darker things, to ghosts and  
their interpretations,  
bastard children of thought and sense,  
the oldest consummation.

So, go now in my stead and see  
what's there, in all these places.

But promise me you won't explain:  
just tell me, and then—as if there too—

I'll see it all and know it with you.

## Marking Time

There was no purpose in the air today,  
no steel tempering in an ardent fire,  
no billowed sails, no desperate play.

No jumper plunged from the sky today,  
tearing at the ripcord of desire,  
feeling that he must fall away

and trust in uncanny threads of silk,  
or die enlivened by his brazen plunge.  
There were no heroes of that ilk.

No one dared that brave descent.

The day declined its chance at glory  
and would not accept what it was sent.

Instead of fire from the grinding wheel,

I saw blank eyes stare back at me  
and then remembered what I wished to feel:

The unnoticed interstices of sense,  
the intervals in which we question time  
and each of its thousand cords relents.

But there remains the promise of another day.

(It will come; it was here before.)

I saw it once, though when, I cannot say.

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**Peter Lopatin** was born and raised in New York where he earned his JD degree and practiced corporate law for thirty years. Along the way, he studied philosophy as a graduate student at the New School for Social Research. After retiring from his legal practice, he obtained a Certificate from the New School in teaching English as a Second Language and has been an ESL teacher since then. He has taught at the University of Connecticut/Stamford, Norwalk Community College, Manhattanville College and, most recently, at the Stamford English Language Academy. Peter's short stories and book

reviews have appeared in *Commentary*, *The Weekly Standard*, *The New Atlantis*, and *New English Review*. His poetry has appeared in *New Millennium Writings* and *Poetry East*.

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