

Poem About Miles by Steve Denehan

Nobody knew his surname
he was just Miles
middle-aged
no wife
no kids
no lawn
no flowers
no car
just a garden of cement
and a bicycle

for the whole of my childhood
he emerged from his side gate
cycling
to work, every morning
from work, every evening
I never saw him walking
not once
he'd give a nod
half a smile
sometimes
he never knew
that he was a kind of hero
to me
he was easy in himself
seemed to have things figured out
Buddha on a bicycle

when he died there were rumours
that he had been there for a month
undiscovered
melting into his armchair
the smell had alerted the neighbours
my mother went to the funeral
to be surprised at the turnout
I asked her what his surname was
saw shame fall on her
she had already forgotten
but it didn't matter
I knew
that Miles would not have cared
one way
or the other

Fields of Opera

A “pocket transistor” is what he called it
and I could hear it
and him
moving about the fields
beside us and behind us
a farmer now, in his old age
but not always
as his tales, tall and otherwise, told

a farmer, rich in his tastes
surrounding us with opera
that poured from his old transistor radio
he, on the other side of rustling copper beeches
talking to his cows
as the day sloped into evening
huge, placid, mooing, chewing beasts
that listened to his voice
the rustling leaves
and opera that will live forever
and then it hit me like a feathered anvil
as I realised
that there are no forevers
anymore

Several Fields Over

Her voice is on the breeze
a distant softness
talking, sometimes singing
several fields over
we have never met
she, a blur
a stranger
to me

but
I have heard her sing to herself
I have heard her call her children
out of the rain
into the sun
I have heard her berate and chide
and laugh

like the lowing of the cows
the whisper of the grass
the buzzing flies and chirping birds
her voice is there
stitched into the fabric of the air
yet

if we were to meet, I suspect
knowing myself as I do
I would not like her
would want to get away from her
and she
from me

she is out there
a few fields away
hanging her clothes
wishing away the rain
and that
for both of us
is enough