

The Days of Dead Flies

Rick Bursky

Marine biologists say flies evolved from shrimp, wings once fins before crawling from the ocean four hundred and thirty million years ago—the first animals to fly. In the last three minutes of their lives, flies are able to travel backwards, their version of a time machine—three minutes into the past. The first flies taught birds formations, the original language; spiders to make webs, the original map. Now, a dozen dead lay on the window sill, two others flap their wings four or five last times. Every day for a week, I find more, no explanation for their sunlit death. Just think how surprised the police were, the purse wrestled from the woman fell to the pavement and a thousand poured out, dead black stars in need of a sky.

Lost On a Detour

Rick Bursky

The road is strewn with dead dogs, small black ones that could be hard to see but the large white ones would be hard to miss; there's also the occasional cat, flat from the neck back. All hit by cars, trucks, perhaps even a yellow motorcycle that struggled to stay upright after striking, then bumping over the body as it hissed the last breath. This carcass-lined road, Braille for some blind god's finger. There's something wrong with the drivers in this town, accident-prone or hateful; and the dogs and cats, stupid or suicidal. When the sun smears the horizon their shadows stretch and touch in a way they never could when alive, creating the path to glory, one long stain.