

from *Lost Transmissions*, poems by David Memmott

## RETIREMENT PARTY

PLAYA INSTITUTE, SUMMER LAKE, MARCH 25, 2012

I come to a clearing below the rimrock  
where the wind makes waves in wild rye

A Mountain Bluebird hovers over the bowing grass  
follows me down from juniper to willow to rose

Such blue cheer in a liminal world so color-blind is  
a miracle to behold where a stiff Souther whips alkali

clouds a thousand feet into the air and the robust harrier  
makes no headway along the pluvial plain

My boots accrue sodden earth as I trudge  
down to water's edge while all the way

this little piece of sky chits and cheers  
from shadows inside a thicket of wild rose

showing off on the rusted back of a disc harrow  
presenting himself from the branches of still bare trees

Walking home I cruise along the highway and brace  
for the bluster I hear gathering from behind

A semi truck blows by, never slowing down  
nearly pulling me into its slipstream  
I pass through the open gate into the yard  
which sits comfortably off the road far enough

to resolve the Tristan chords of modernity into  
a delicate balance between nature and appropriate technology

The bluebird no longer follows me  
I consider changing my route next time

so I can maybe hold onto that giddy fellow  
a little while longer

I open the back door where inside my work remains unfinished  
where I talk to the world through screens and dials

pushing buttons, searching for the right key, the right color mix  
turning machines on and off and living somewhere in-between

The fire by now is nearly exhausted, cold draft  
augers through every unsealed crack in the walls

From the direction of the woodpile  
I hear a *chit, chit, chit*, and discover the sky

*is* falling, one bluebird at a time until  
the whole yard is azure standard bluebird  
an internal combustion of lapis lazuli  
an unsettled flutter declaring *we're here, we're here*

On the threshold I hesitate feeling the tug  
as balance shifts from living to thinking about living

from bluebirds to writing about bluebirds  
from sensation to reverie

Fragments of blue sky blown to pieces  
by gunmetal clouds plowing like battleships

through rippling reflections in a shallow lake  
descend like fallout, calling me

from where I hover over the threshold

*Chit, chit, chit, we're here, we're here*

Today I was lucky enough to receive bluebirds  
and pass them on to you

Tomorrow...?