

Poetry Porch: Poetry

Living on the Borderland By William Doreski

Keats thrived in liminal landscapes
north of London. Meadow faced
suburban villa. Marshland fumed
and the high road jangled. The boy
poet nuzzled the threatened world
of badger, hedgehog, newt, and frog
and sang in his favorite colors
against the sin of enclosure.

In my own childhood I focused
on the borders of things. A rock
held up against the sky. Where
does rock end and sky begin?
Myopic, I felt along the frame
that encloses everything, the line
between turtle shell and water,
between self and vacant space.

When I held that rock why weren't
child and rock a single being?
Like but unlike Keats I stepped
forward and committed myself
to fondling the edges of things,
where sea horizons blur in mist
and city streets acned with potholes
reveal earth-scape hidden below.

The genius of Keats seized myth
translated into psychic gestures
larger than life. Titans brooding
in massive bowers no human
would dare attempt to inhabit.
I settled for algae green ponds
and the ruins of old brick mills,
hardly challenging the limits.

The silence I met at Keats' grave
under that pyramid in Rome
lingers like a frog in my throat.
Three times his age at his death
I can't speak one word in pastels
as delicate as his, the raw earth
refusing to distinguish itself
from his glad expenditure of flesh.