BRIAN SATROM

Brian Satrom completed an MFA at the University of Maryland. He works at an online university and supports faculty as they design courses. His poems have appeared most recently in *Poetry Northwest* and *Knockout*. 
FROM WITHIN

*Lake Monona, Madison, Wisconsin*

Acolytes of the sluggish, muggy dark,
their dozen or so rods—the tip of one dipping
into the still water—crowded around a spot
where street runoff empties into the lake, blacks
and Hmong casting from shore, some sitting
on large plastic buckets, and whites from aluminum boats
they’ve brought in close, a ball game on a radio, bobbers
with lights like fireflies above the surface
though fireflies don’t hover above surfaces
or bob but trace part of an arc like a match
as it’s tossed away. Otis Redding’s plane
went down here on the way to his next show.

I doubt he knew the name of the lake, his thoughts
other places when he traveled. If you walk
this path certain times of day, you'll notice
a loon close enough to see the red in its eye,
strange in the reflection of a power plant,
of four tall smoke stacks and a city skyline.

Have you caught a fish of any kind? From within
that stillness you feel a tug. At first you’re not sure
what it is, your heart thumping in your chest.
FARTHER THAN I THOUGHT

Dusk, bare oaks across the street looking
less like trees, more like cathedrals
with their columns and vaulted ceilings,
echoes and saints, we changing too among
the day’s last shadows, you at our living-room window,
lights off, chin resting on your knee,

like a passenger on a train, and I,
hunched over a book in the near dark,
either a fist opening or closing. I’ve read

people are meant for certain moments
they come into their own, stand out, like falling snow
when lit up by the headlight of a locomotive,
like anything all of a sudden there in the branches,

owl-eyed, or reflected in a river. Though
the afternoon you and I found ourselves
stuck in traffic between protesters
and police with their shields, helmets,
M16s, I just wanted to go unnoticed, slip
through the cordon to the other side. And once,

after a storm, not sure where the others
I’d come with had wandered, up to my knees

in a snow drift next to a stream, surprised
by a ram’s horn I held, how it simply
broke off in my grip, the ram I was
trying to free still stuck, blood on its head
at the stump, night coming on, trees
in their moment of transformation, I suddenly
felt far away, a lot farther than I thought
I’d gone. I like the movie about a journey,
a tin man, wicked witch, something

the wanderers search for far from home, a wizard
who shows them what they’ve already become.