

ROBERT MILTNER

Two Poems

Forwarding Mail

Moving into a turquoise tourist hotel on the Florida Gulf Coast beach,
Angel's picked her decor as all terra cotta, pink flamingo, old bamboo.

Open her refrigerator, it's chilled wine and blood oranges; open
her cupboard, it's stacks of canned soup and snacks packed in plastic.

Sitting in her seagreen lawn chair on the wide sweep of beach, Angel
squints at the thin-as-exquisite-prose horizon, second-guessing its
symbolism.

Open her heart, it's undelivered envelopes, queued e-mails, and
unfinished postcards to the world.

Dreaming of tropical groves, Angel imagines that she is one of those
seagulls she has seen rowing across the sky toward where it fades into
a dull shade of later afternoon blue.

Open her eyes, it's sadness, and uncertainty, darting like so many
minnows: first the startled burst of pink, then the smooth glide of
silver.

The Orphan House

Motor oil leaks from a cracked head
gasket leaving a slick which glistens

like a prism, a rainbow, a colour wheel
along the greasy blacktop in the alley

back behind the closed, boarded-up store.
Torn wrappers and newspaper scraps embed

against the bowed and rusted mesh fence.
Worked loose by the rumble of truck traffic

and the prying fingers of a snarling wind
which tunnels down streets of old buildings,

brittle shale shingles the hue of clam shells
slip from the roof, slide, land with a flat slap

on the cracked and uneven city sidewalks.
A startled pigeon flaps madly away.