

## **Three Poems by Katharine Towers**

### **BLACKBIRD**

For a blackbird has time, and will sit in a corner of a high tree  
to look down on his kingdom of hedges and fields and a garden.  
Why not sing when the world lies at your feet?

His song is made not of thought but of feeling, and he'll sing  
because it is late afternoon and the moment for singing.  
This is his third summer and this his tall tree.

The past is tucked away safe in the branches and some  
of the singers he hears as he sings must be his own children.  
These are all he possesses: music and children,

music and children, the old life of singing and children.  
He'll sing of the past, tucked safe in the branches of trees  
in a garden whose flowers are golden –

and somewhere his children are singing because it is late,  
and his long memorial song in the dark is broken and golden.

**HER BLUE CHAIR** (*Hermit Songs 5*)

What she would like is for no one  
to know she is in the garden –  
not the birds, not the leaves, not the children.  
There is her blue chair in the shade of the plum tree.  
If she sits for many afternoons  
she will manage to disappear from her body,  
which is not called hiding.  
Her absence will shine like a bright new coin.  
Birds will fly through her as through cloisters.  
What she would like is for the garden  
to forget her here and forget her everywhere.

**ERIK SATIE'S *GNOSSIENNE* LESSON**

A word which might mean *knowing* or it might  
describe the merry dance of Theseus at Knossos.  
There's no need to understand – the point's  
to help the fingers find a restful state of mind.

Let them idle carelessly inside the minor key of F  
which is the deep dark key of longing for the grave.  
Pretend the note to come is just a whim, as if it's easy  
not to know what happens in the future. Let the left hand

play the same sad triad while the right hand  
wanders like a child lost on the edge of thought.  
Don't mind coming back to the same old question!  
Best not count or measure; play faster, play slower.

Believe me when I say we can't know more:  
we begin, we love the past and then there's the last chord.