



Image from Underwater Ancient Cities and Ruins

John Zedolik

Luxury Down

The stones of old Baiae
tumble down to the sea

turned only from their tide course
by terraces trim once tended

by a slave gardener
under whose enforced care

hydrangeas certainly
must have bobbed

to the ships in the breeze
plying near the welcome shore.

I now step down through
the layers, inspecting Mercury's

temple with its mostly intact
convex concrete roof,

testing Echo's own
with a shout above the caught pool,

toward a rose marble column
truncated to six or seven feet

so now like a quiet, long-waiting
companion, whose cool, fluted

circuit, I touch with an open hand,

but I will not sample the celebrated

luxury—oysters from Lucrine's brine

long since silted.

I only imagine salt and ancient mollusk flesh—

and am no imperial admiral anyway.

Covert Mechanism

That big green switch on the shed
behind his maternal grandparents'
house never did anything,

but flipping it—waiting for the heavy
strong delayed click, as if the fat
spring inside must be nudged

awake—always satisfied the grandson
lad amid the odors of disuse
and softening wood, though he wondered

what motions were occurring
within the machine to produce
the gap between action and result

whose consequence was no
reconstituted monster's electrical animation
or opened trap door, just the crisp

sound amid the many mysteries
that posed in mildewed corners
and crawl space feet above

that beckoned with a crack he
would have to leave for a lifetime alone

John Zedolik's poems have appeared in such publications as *The Bangalore Review*, *The Alembic*, *Common Ground Review*, *Third Wednesday*, *The Journal* (UK), and *Ascent Aspirations* (Canada). A full-length collection of his poems will appear in July 2019. He writes: "My iPhone continues to be my primary poetry notebook, and I hope my use of technology in regard to this ancient art form remains fruitful."