



Photo by Christopher Bernard

Ace Boggess

Two Poems

Death Invites You to a Family Dinner

You might not recognize the face behind the invitation.
 Could resemble Uncle Joe with boozy breath &
 one lazy eye, Aunt Shannon who loves funerals
 because she gets to see her cousins there,
 or your silent grandfather, dead himself these many years.
 It sounds like fun, but the wine is poisoned,
 meat spoiled, fruit tray has begun to rot.
 You don't see the flies at first.
 You're nose-blind to the carrion air.
 Don't intend to compliment a gathering for despair,
 but how you enjoy a get-together,
 not expecting it to end in a parade.

Good Friday

Statewide Lockdown, Day Seventeen

My father sends an e-mail
with the subject: *Trump's Easter Message*.
I don't open it. "Fuck," I say.
It's all I can do not to hit reply &
repeat the word in electronic silence.

He's still alive, I think. My dad, I mean.
That's something. My stepmother
must have boarded the door,
said, "You're not going anywhere."

I'm grateful for one small sign
amidst the strain of quarantine.

My father, a bulldog on or off a leash,
would growl from a pew,
shoulder to shoulder with unreality.
He'd catch the virus with irreverence.
In joy, he'd die, his staying home
cause to be happy & forgive
his politics less fatal than a plague.

Ace Boggess is author of five books of poetry—*Misadventure, I Have Lost the Art of Dreaming It So, Ultra Deep Field, The Prisoners*, and *The Beautiful Girl Whose Wish Was Not Fulfilled*—and the novels *States of Mercy* and *A Song Without a Melody*. His writing has appeared in *Harvard Review, Notre Dame Review, Mid-American Review, Rattle, River Styx*, and many other journals. He received a fellowship from the West Virginia Commission on the Arts and spent five years in a West Virginia prison. His sixth collection, *Escape Envy*, is forthcoming from Brick Road Poetry Press in 2021.