

Poems by Suzanne Lummis

Things that Catch Fire

Your comb stands on end,
sparking and crackling.
The goldfish are little lights
too far gone to save.
You wonder what variation
of the Midas touch
you've got that turns things
not to gold but to flame.
You can make a little window
in your dreams to peer out,
but cannot prevent
your shoes from flattening into
footprints of charcoal.
Next morning, your possessions
have been restored, the goldfish
behaving as if nothing happened.
Even your favorite old coat
won't let on where
it went last night. It hangs
unrisen, blank
as winter light, its sleeve
brushed with traces—sly,
immaterial ash.

Seven Poems

The useless poem is like a sock of butter.

The useful poem is not good for much.

The good poem is like a pat of butter and two clean socks.

The bad poem rises from the sea like Godzilla and flattens everything.

The great poem is inescapable too.

The really bad poem
just flops around like a fried egg in a dryer.

And, finally, there's the poem that has no name,
that returns in your dreams,

breathes on your shadow.

You know, it's the one you'll refuse to write,

until the night it tracks you
through the littered streets

of some abandoned city and
faces you down.

BIO

In 2013 Suzanne Lummis won the **Blue Lynx Poetry Award**—her collection *Open 24 Hours* will be released by Lynx House Press in 2014. Her poems have appeared in noted literary journals across the country and in such anthologies as **California Poetry from the Gold Rush to the Present** (eds. Dana Gioia, et al), the Knopf “Everman’s Poetry Library” anthologies, **Poems of the American West** (ed. Robert Mezey), **Poems of Murder and Mayhem** (ed. Kurt Brown), and are forthcoming in Knopf’s **Human and Inhuman Monstrous Verse** (eds. Tony Barnstone, Michelle Michell-Foust). Her **definitive essay on the poem noir** appeared in New Mexico’s **Malpais Review**, for which she is California Correspondent. She performs with the serio-comic trio **Nearly Fatal Women**.