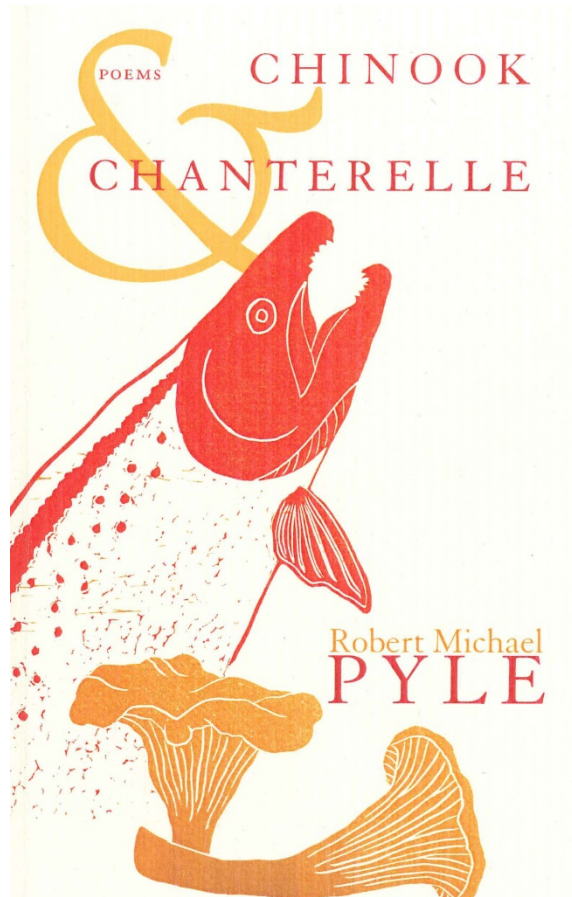


Poems from *Chinook & Chanterelle*
By Robert Michael Pyle



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THE ROOM OF LOST ITEMS

What if you opened a door
and there was a room
with everything you'd ever lost?
The paper flowers you made
for your mother, that blew
away in the snow.

All the jackets you left on buses.
That scab.

The hats alone would fill a long shelf! The heather
purple deerstalker, the 3X Beaver Stetson smokey,
the Hoss Cartwright 10-gallon that badly needed losing.
Remember that beautiful scarf left in the lecture hall?
The binoculars that were part of your body for 40 years?
The wallets? The gloves? All those things you promised
not to lose.

And then you walk through this door, and they're all here!
Oh, the joy! That special sock! That kitten, those keys...
but wait. There are people in here too, and versions
of your heart
in several shapes and states.
And the deal is? You have
to take them all.

SACRAMENT (KITTY BRINGS SUPPER)

Band-tailed pigeons darken the sky
this year, as they used to say
about passenger pigeons. Flood
through, oak to tall oak, stuffing
acorns like popcorn. Then, disturbed
by the slamming screen door, erupt
again, snowing small white feathers.

Kitty mostly devils voles, leaves
the birds alone, but has caught
pigeons before. This one he brings
inside, decorates the dining room
like aftermath of a pillow fight.

After all that, eats just a bite, leaves
the rest for me. A little more plucking,
a bottle of Pinot Gris, a hot skillet: liver,
heart, the gizzard with its acorns;
big purple breast, plump little drumsticks,
all with leeks and butter. Mmm, what a bird,
the band-tail. *What a cat.*

P.S. Today, he catches a mole, half his size,
and brings it to me. Thanks, Kitty: I'm good.

STILL LIFE

On the kitchen windowsill,
bleeding hearts spring
from a vase: the big garden ones
like pink, puffed-up pigtaails around
their clitoral white centers; the smaller
wild ones in deeper rose, all pendent
from arcing pedicels.

Different leaves to either side:
fingered fine or coarser, in measure
to their blooms. *Dicentra*: two parts
around that intricate middle. Pollinated
within, they never quite open: just spread,
balloon, reflex, collapse, and drop,
like old hearts everywhere.

Above and behind, two broad green vanes embrace
a flight of “white coral bells, upon a slender stalk” –
lilies of the valley, designed to break
with their unbearable scent
every tame and wild heart, even before
they fall.