On Cognitive Dissonance

You go to the art show, which is in memoriam of the dead artists the one whose death was accidental, the other one not so much. It isn’t enough to know that someone died, we need to know how in order to distance ourselves from any mortal likelihood. Can the sculpture act as political barometer? Even the poem has borders.

The long walks you expose your skin to hoping to perfume yourself with place are taking you nowhere, are greening your sensibilities, which should not be confused with growth. There’s always a song somewhere thrumming in invisible frequencies, there’s the light that looks like a certain memory, which reminds you to avoid such vagaries, to pin the tail despite the blindfold, to lead the donkey directly to its paddock. And this effort, the daily tally where you have picked things up and put them in the proper stacks is what, an attempt to resolve reality? What our memory omits is for our own gain—our minds congested with habit, our finger tips insist, force each task. While above you the storm cloud will not give, but grants us darkness. You dressed carefully for the show, considered each layer. For a second you mistake the sculpture’s mouth for a cradle. What other misapprehensions have led you here?

Cherry Pickman

Cherry Pickman is the author of Theory of Tides, winner of the Poetry Society of America’s Chapbook Fellowship. Her work has appeared in, or is forthcoming from, 32 Poems, American Poetry Review, Bennington Review, Boston Review, Dossier, Indiana Review, Jai-Alai Magazine, and PEN, among others. A selection of her poems was included in Eight Miami Poets (2015), an anthology published by Jai-Alai Books. She has been shortlisted for the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, and has been a finalist for the Snowbound Chapbook Competition, The Missouri Review Editors Prize; and, most recently, her full-length collection, Islanders, was a semifinalist for the Alice James Book Award. Pickman is a graduate of Columbia University’s MFA program; she lives and works as an arts editor in Miami.