

**Stephen Cushman**

## **There Are No Messages in Your Trash**

Really? Could have sworn there was one  
in the empty green bottle that used to hold beer  
or can of spent insecticide, also green but another shade,  
looking for a good time, let's take a walk so I can suck you,  
me and my tick friends, chigger friends, all us mosquitoes,  
Johnny-Come-Lately, Tiger mosquito, invasive species  
from Southeast Asia, thanks a bunch, transmission vector  
for viral pathogens, West Nile virus, Yellow fever, dengue fever,  
St. Louis encephalitis, you catch that one it's usually mild  
except if you're old, fatality ranges to thirty percent, suck suck,  
does that feel good, have to admit people taste better  
in Southeast Asia, something about them, could be the diet,  
all that rice, one lady in particular, she was from Singapore,  
told all our friends and they made her sick, so there's a lesson  
for losers to learn, next thing we know it's off to America,  
got trapped in her car when she drove to the port  
to wave at her boyfriend, hopped on his neck and suddenly  
we're out,  
anchors a-weigh, next stop is Oakland, no no this can't be right,  
we've only hit the eastern U. S., must have been a plane, cargo  
hold,  
don't bite a baggage handler, and then it's DC, what luck,  
a soldier, back from the hot zone, guy has these eyes,  
yellow, amber, hazel, ochre, you giving me a hard time,  
suppose I say saffron or basically beer-colored, let's get over  
this adjective hangover, the description thing, it's a little unfair,  
what do we do, land and hold still while someone injects us  
with his mental image, no time for that, en garde avant-garde,  
here comes my ride, we're off to the wedding, she's a nice girl,  
hates his deployments, maybe she's used to his some-color eyes,  
the way they keep flicking, hard to connect with.

## **Want to Make Something of It?**

Rain-sucking son of an acorn.  
Photosynthesizing sack of sap.  
Back off. You can spot a faith insufficient  
to wither you like the fig tree cursed?  
Care to risk it? Skipping breakfast makes one testy.  
Especially on the road to town. Is that a dare?  
I execrate your pollen-spewing. I abominate  
your stumbling-roots. Bark-face. Leaf-bag.  
Your xylem I anathematize. I'll make you wish  
you had gone down in the weekend tornado.  
I'll make you regret you excrete oxygen.  
Add another ring? Don't make me laugh.  
Say your prayers, arrogant angiosperm.  
I'll teach your kind to mess with a teacher,  
hungry and doomed, his last Monday morning.