

Owl Watching

by David James

I attended the burial of our affair when I found her notebook—maybe it should be called her diary—that she had foolishly left on the deck of my beach house where she stayed while I was on that short trip to Chicago. Numb at first, unsure how to proceed, I went in and tried to watch a TV documentary, the subject of which I don't even remember. For the next couple of days my bruised mind was infected with the soundtrack from that early seventies “The Way We Were” movie which is about two desperate people who have a wonderful romance, but their political views and convictions drive them apart. Funny how our affair mimicked that flick with its similar theme. We gave each other our undivided affection until politics entered and immediately imploded the mood. Her endearing “honey” quickly became “Nazi” or something equally as cruel and my retort was usually something worse, neither of us willing to relinquish our view.

Yesterday, I called in sick and hung around the beach place trying to take my mind off the breakup by pretending to do chores, dusting things that had no dust, collecting the empty coat hangers to take back to my condo in town. Things like that. Then, I sat out on the deck with my laptop into the late afternoon, texting her, emailing her, never getting a response. As I looked up to think of something else to write, I saw an owl swoop down from its high limb perch and grab a field mouse with its talons and fly away to who knows where. Owls see well and notice subtleties, like movements of grass.

When I went inside I knew. She did not forgetfully leave her notebook, it was her way of saying goodbye.

