

## POETRY CORNER

### *The All in All*

by John Sack  
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Just now You Are a tawny tassel  
On a reed of ornamental grass  
That I see waving  
To the south.

And when I face the north,  
You Are a fledgling  
Steller's Jay,  
Exploring the outdoor Adirondack—  
No larger than a sparrow,  
Though already fully crested,

And then You Are the tripod cat  
Hopping to the slider  
While harboring a fantasy  
Of captured baby jay.

And now You Are the Spirit  
Splaying wide my heart,  
Urging every cell to dance,  
And laugh,  
And clap its hands,

Leaving me to marvel  
How You Are  
The All in All.

*John and his wife (Applegater book reviewer Christin Lore Weber) hermit and write near Buncom on Sterling Creek Road. Have a submission for Poetry Corner, either by an Applegate resident or about the Applegate? Email it to Applegater poetry editor, Paul Tipton, at [ptipton4u2c@gmail.com](mailto:ptipton4u2c@gmail.com).*

## Voices of the Applegate

### Pause continues for Voices of the Applegate

We are sorry to say that, due to the pandemic,  
Voices of the Applegate is still on hold.  
You can keep in touch with us on  
Facebook (Voices of the Applegate).  
If things change during the next few months,  
we will certainly let you know.

We hope you will all stay healthy and  
hopefully we'll see you soon.

Joan Peterson  
541-846-6988

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## BOOK REVIEW

### *Piranesi*

Susanna Clarke  
Bloomsbury Publishing  
New York, 2020

BY CHRISTIN LORE WEBER

When this book came in the mail from my dear friend Kath, I anticipated a good read. She had given no clue regarding it, but I was pretty sure I'd seen it as one of the top titles of the winter season on the readers' go-to internet site, literaryhub.com. Anyway, Kath would never suggest any book but the best. I turned it over to read the back of the dust jacket. Words like "astonished, gripping, haunting, beauty, tension, restraint, pitch-perfect" leapt out at me. Then Erin Morgenstern's line: "Precisely the sort of book that I love wordlessly handing to someone so they can have the pleasure of uncovering its secrets for themselves." Ah! Ergo: Kath's lack of clues.

I opened it and read the first two pages. Wow! Then I disturbed my husband, John, who was engrossed in his own book. "Just listen to this!" At first I only intended to read a couple of paragraphs but couldn't stop and read the first section—short, only two pages, but hey. I couldn't make myself stop.

"I'm reminded of Jorge Borges," I told him. "The Labyrinth."

"Teresa of Avila," he ventured. "Interior Castle."

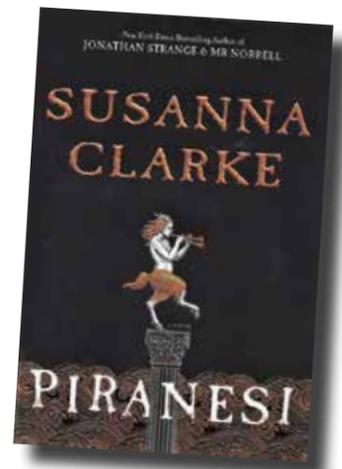
"I can see that. Hints of both. But different. I already like the narrator—the way he notices everything so precisely."

"How do you know it's a 'he'?"

I smirked. He grinned. We both went back to reading.

After an hour I began to understand that while I felt eager to review this book, it would be quite difficult without spoiling it for you. I wanted you to be as amazed as I was by the strangeness of it, as tantalized by the world that pulled me deeper and deeper into its halls and vestibules. It was eerily like a mystery, but unlike any that I'd read or seen on PBS. And what was to be solved? Or found? Or discovered? Or understood?

I texted Kath. All she would say was, "It's a magnificent act of imagination." Those vestibules and halls, and now I was caught in them. When I needed to leave



the book to fix a meal or watch the news or pay a bill or any of the other ills or fortunes this flesh is heir to, I kept scrambling to get back into that other world—the one Susanna Clarke had conjured and put between the covers of this book. It haunted and transported me. It terrified and seduced me.

What follows is a bit of Clarke's description close to the novel's beginning. I'm hoping to share some little part of the experience of reading *Piranesi* without giving any spoilers:

*I am determined to explore as much of the World as I can in my lifetime. . . I have explored the Drowned Halls where the Dark Waters are carpeted with white water lilies. I have seen the Derelict Halls of the East where Ceilings, Floors—sometimes even Walls!—have collapsed and the dimness is split by shafts of grey Light.*

*In all these places I have stood in Doorways and looked ahead. I have never seen any indication that the World was coming to an End, but only the regular progression of Halls and Passageways into the Far Distance. (p.5)*

Opening the pages of this novel, you might wonder, "Where exactly am I?" And then the question could arise, "...and who is Piranesi?" Settle in. This is your chance to become a sleuth, an archeologist, a student of architecture in Venice or in Rome, an interpreter of myths, maybe a Jungian analyst. It wouldn't hurt to search for "Piranesi" on Wikipedia. (That didn't occur to me until I'd finished reading the entire book.) I don't think the encyclopedic references would spoil the read; they might even deepen the mystery.

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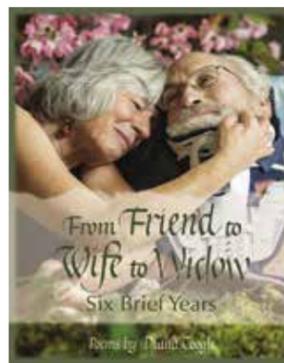


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