

Bio

Marc Livanos, is a devoted poet from the University of West Florida. He worked as an environmentalist at Ecology and Environment, Inc. His poetry appears in *Straylight Magazine*, *POEM*, *Sheepshead Review*, *Artifact Nouveau*, *Old Red Kimono*, *Ship of Fools*, *Foliate Oak Literary Magazine*, *Wordeater*, *Glass Mountain's Shards*, *Poets' Espresso Review*, *Song of the San Joaquin Quarterly*, *Red River Review* and other journals.

The Bird Sings for Me

By Marc Livanos

Between the sun and shade,
a cardinal replete in pointed hat
pecks and flutters about
seeking to thrust at some worm
withering on the sodden ground.

He takes three gawky steps,
stops, looks down, walks
some more, sees me and stares.
I turn my head and slink away.

Feeling a kindred spirit, he chirps
talkatively, almost in syllables,
like a newspaper boy hawking the news -
Round-Up turned his friend blue,
spraying makes him sick and I
make too much noise for his song
to be heard by fledging females.

Soon, he alights to a nearby branch
where like an Officer on Deck, he trills -
it's too hot to scavenge for food,
climate change is taking its toll
and when's the sprinkler coming on.

I thought of questions that have no reply
but he was already perched on a branch
staying cool to gather his thoughts
ready to share with anyone willing to hear.

Consequences

The tall pines oft shimmered
silhouetted against the sun.
Their long willowy boughs
greeted all each morning.

Today, a bulldozer slammed
their trunks and ripped out their roots.
“Slash pine ain't nothing,”
they said.

Still, dozens of mountain bluebirds
screeched in anger.
Turkey vultures and field hawks
took flight for state preserves.

Possum, coyote, armadillo,
grackles, red and gray fox,

acorn-freighted squirrels,
goldenrod and sumac are gone.

Critters of all types fled
to nearby neighborhoods.
Just mounds of red clay
await concrete foundations.

Why can't we understand
the need to interact with nature?
Listen to the mountain bluebirds
and share their outrage.

Color Blind (For Real?)

Why is my race your foe needling you to lord over me,
saving me from my own savagery?

Why is my skin color a phobia gnawing at your innards,
making door locks snap as I approach?

Why is my punishment swift revealing deep seated prejudices,
exposing unrecognized biases?

Why is my street flashing "blue"
when verdicts and fines from the 2008 meltdown are reversed?

Why is my excessive "heat" normal
when straight powder has a lighter sentence than crack?

Why is my wanting to explode unexpected
when a child or brother of mine is killed?

Why is my disinterest in school surprising
when suspension leads to a Juvenile Delinquency record?

Why is my broken home shocking
when a JD record forces Family Services to see if mom is at home or work?

Why can't you see how I feel when redlining my community continues as Hudson City Bancorp
pays \$33M to make redlining allegations go away?

Why can't you see how I feel about democrats wanting a piece of Dr. King
when they created a welfare system making fathers abandon their children?

Why can't you see how I feel about republicans
when they just want another mockery of the Civil Rights Act?

Why can't you see how my heroes are athletes and entertainers,
not your pandering leaders?

Why can't you see how I feel when the NBA, reacting to LeBron going pro out of high school,
forces players to wait till 19, while PGA, AHL and MLB do not?

Why can't you see how your rise from poverty
didn't require you to deal with what I do?

Why can't you see how your decades of

pensions and home appreciation were denied me?

Why can't you see how your decades
of opportunities were never mine?

Why can't you see how I feel
when you just see me as another deadbeat or dealer?

Why can't you see how my constant smile and nod
responds to your hurtful put downs?

Why can't you see how I just want
you to be truthful?

Why can't you see the difference
is the difference within you?

Why can't you see your problem
doesn't emanate from me?

Why can't you see I'll respect you
when you respect me?

No point our talking
if you won't hear me.