

David Oates

Cascandinavian Secession

We have been noticing, lately, up here among the fir trees and
coffee,
that we have way more in common with Sweden than with
Texas.

We are remembering the Alamo somewhat ruefully now
as the world is cowboyed into submission.

And we are apt to think—Why not a nice temperate republic,
circumpolar, coastal, mountainy, boreal, sublime?

Opposing all aggressors with cool weather gear,
rainswept harbors, and well-misted weekends?

Shrugging off thermal machismos
with the unconquerable estrogen of endless forests

and well-rooted love of actual
(not metaphorical) sex?

Helsinki, Portland, Oslo, Seattle—
isn't there some way to arrange convenient transit?

Can't Vancouver bond with Tallinn, Estonians
teach us to sing, Lapps appear with tasseled caps

and weaving looms in our public squares? Latitudinarians all,
we could figure out a parliament by noon, then go have a drink.

Politics can follow, maps can be adjusted
to a polar perspective

edging the hot lands off to the sides:
let them squabble and be distorted.

We'll have our own language in no time—
mukluk, anorak, kayak, brewpub, bookstore,

moderation, contemplation, mediation.

The desert people never understood us anyway

with their warring prophets,
their scorched black and white.

Forest vision is soft, maternal, mat-moss and shadow-shift
ever turning one thing into another. We're used to revision.

And our currents go round and round
cleansing the beaches, cupping the sunglint

into wavery patterns that might mean salmon or cod,
ling or king, going or coming,

might remind us of long, long nights to cuddle (winter)
or cavort (summer). If you look up afterwards,

arms folded under, the stars will be the same, any season,
far from mullahs and Southern Methodists

and you can think about tomorrow, what you'll cook for dinner,
and how to knit your town together ever more snugly.