

Neil de la Flor and Maureen Seaton

Life is a Mystery: A History Without Answers

Life is a mystery. It rhymes with history, which rhymes with kiss and something else.

Life is a mystery because when I try to figure out how the toad turned gold then climbed the door to my doorknob and hung there as I went in and out as if his feet were made of tape and he was more beautiful than even a flame tree in summer, I can't.

Life is a mystery because here I am all warm-bodied and there is a perfect gardenia not ten feet from my house, emitting fumes of love and I can't decide if God sent me the gardenia because he wants me to have a sweet day or because I might die today and he knows how much I love gardenias.

She waits by the window next to the statue of Mary recast as the Virgin of Guadalupe. She waits by the window but stares down the hallway where Christ once hung at the end of the long corridor. She cancels her Netflix subscription.

They wander around the room wearing blankets. The dogs follow them like furry shadows. The sliding glass windows are open just in case they are forced into submission. They're writing on the walls with blue crayons and then they take a nap on the sofa next to the window next to the statue of Mary as Guadalupe.

Life is a mystery. The man in the house waits for the man of the house to reveal the kind of man he will become outside of the house when the man comes to take him to the movies or the store. He enters the room.

Life is a mystery, so they say, but I say life is a big moon and all we have to do is fly there on our dinosaur bones and we can turn around and see everything clearly. Life is a mystery up close, it's true, but from far away, it looks exactly like the door to a great Chinese restaurant.



Maureen Seaton has authored twenty-one poetry collections, both solo and collaborative, most recently, *Sweet World* (CavanKerry Press, 2019). Her awards include the Iowa Prize, Lambda Literary Award, Audre Lorde Award, an NEA fellowship, and the Pushcart. Her work has appeared in *Best American Poetry* as well as numerous literary journals and anthologies. Her memoir, *Sex Talks to Girls* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, 2018), also garnered a “Lammy”. With poet Neil de la Flor, she edited the anthology *Reading Queer: Poetry in a Time of Chaos* (Anhinga Press, 2018). Find her @mseaton9.

Neil de la Flor is a writer, educator, artist, and executive director of Reading Queer, a Miami-based organization dedicated to promoting and fostering queer literary culture in South Florida. His first book, *Almost Dorothy*, won the 2009 Marsh Hawk Press Poetry Prize and was published in 2010. Marsh Hawk also published his second solo collection, *An Elephant’s Memory of Blizzards* in 2013. He won the Sentence Book Award with co-author Maureen Seaton for *Sinéad O’Connor and Her Coat of a Thousand Bluebirds* (Firewheel Editions, 2011). You can find him @neil_delaflor & neildelaflor.com & readingqueer.com.