Frog and Toad Confront the Alterity of Otherness

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Frog and Toad Confront the Alterity of Otherness

The sun was hot in the sky
like a muffin in a bright blue tin.

The day was just the day.
The wind was nothing more
than wind, the leaves were leaves
and kept on being leaves.

Frog, however, was confused
as to why he wasn't Toad.

Frog knew he was Frog,
but on this day, he thought
that was not who he was supposed to be.
Today, this morning,
he feared he was the wrong one.
His skin felt too clammy.

his eyes too bulgy
Even his suit seemed
that of another creature.
Everything was wrong:

The trees overhead, the birds in them.
Toad, on the other hand,
woke up troubled by how
different he was than Frog.

To him, Frog, was wholly
unknown and unknowable.

The yellow flowers outside his window,
the waterbirds down by the lake
that arrived only in winter.
the dreams of alligators and snakes
that swam through his sleeping,
made more sense to him

than this Frog in his threadbare suit
and flappy feet.

How odd that they both wanted
to be in the other’s body.

longing to live in the
Frog and Toadness of the other.

It is Toad who will understand that to love
the unknown is to say yes
to the ineffability of difference.
And in seconds. Frog shall find himself

stunned with a recognition
that to love the unknown

is to say yes to sorrow,
yes to the presence of absence.
yes to the chance that alethia
may never rise out of the pond.

Frog makes Toad a plate of toast
with strawberry jam.

He waddles across the room,
sets down the plate.

pours Toad some coffee.
The sun is hot in the sky

like a scone on a skyblue table.
Toad looks over at Frog.
Good old Frog, he thinks.
That bastard knows I hate toast.

He spreads the jam like a man
might smooth mortar on a brick

for which there is no building.
Thank you, he says.

Thank you Frog.