Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Cockroach: Apologies to Wallace Stevens

Jeff Hoover
THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A COCKROACH

Apologies to Wallace Stevens

I. Among the towering spice rack,
the only moving things
were the legs of the cockroach.

II. I was of six minds
Like a food processor
in which there are six cockroaches.

III. The cockroach slid across the wet table top.
It was a small part of an impression of Peggy Flemming.

IV. A man and a woman are two different things
A man and a woman and a cockroach,
are two different things and a household pest.

V. I do not know which I prefer,
The beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes
The cockroach urinating
of just after.

VI. Green, water sucking ferns filled the window
with long green fans.
The shadow of the cockroach
crossed it, to and fro.
The mood traced in the shadow
"Could you direct me to the Roach Hotel?"

VII. O bearded man in Creative Writing,
why do you imagine being Tom Selleck?
Do you not see how the cockroach
skeets around the feet
of the nymphomaniacs about you?

VIII. I know jive accents
and perverted, sadistic moans;
But I know, too,
that the blackbird
ate my cockroach.

IX. When the cockroach marched out of sight,
it marked the edge
of one of many equilateral triangles.
X.  At the sight of cockroaches
    flying in the turquoise light,
    Even the poets
    would cry out sharply,
    "Cockroaches don't fly"

XI.  He rode over Idaho
     In a '62 Buick.
     Once, a fear shocked him,
     In that he mistook the shadow of a blackbird
     for his cockroach.

XII.  The river is flooded.
      The cockroach is shopping at Apple Valley.

XIII. It was morning, all morning—It also snowed.
      The cockroach sat reading the Wall Street Journal.

   Jeff Hoover