

## **King Jumbo**

God, what a fat squirrel!

I caught him red handed one wet October morning  
swelling his cheeks with chunks of my Halloween pumpkin.  
His stare was fixed on a hole in my neighbor's sagging roof,  
calculating how he could bring the now faceless orange mound  
back to his second-story home.

Determined to investigate, he waddle-hopped across the lawn,  
pausing occasionally to make sure he hadn't passed by any fallen birdseed  
or human-to-rodent handouts,  
and stopped at the base of the mulberry tree.

A Herculean ascent.  
A fuzzy water balloon  
scarcely balancing on wobbly tendrils of wooden tightropes.

At the gutter, he lifted himself up,  
as a bloated diver lifts himself up and out of the deep end,  
barely managing to squeeze through his front door.

I was left hoping that my neighbor hadn't noticed  
her missing black shingle  
as the bushy tail faded away.

**Veronica Kott**