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Poem by Robin Chapman



“A Local Life”

says the *Washington Post* in the obituary
my sister sends—John Hoke, dead at 85,
a tinkerer and inventor we never heard of,
who spent his life seeing solutions everywhere:
solar-powered boats and cars, roof gardens
to cool in summer, heat in winter; yurt
technology only now installed. He stocked
the parks with electric golf carts, turned
the dank stink of sludge ponds into sweet marsh

A Local Life

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ecosystems, wanted to bequeath twenty squirrels
to every house, running wheels to generate
what we need of electricity. On the clipping
I try to calculate how many chipmunks
that would convert to, in the spirit of using
our local resource, though the insistent noise
of vocal warning chirps might interfere
with bedtime reading and morning oatmeal.
Over my coffee I read that John Hoke's dead,
and outside our problems multiply.
"Opportunities," he'd have said.

Art Information

- "[Land of the Dreamer](#) [5]" © Nathan Dumlao; public domain.



Robin Chapman's ninth collection, *Six True Things* (Tebot Bach, 2017), poems of her childhood in the Manhattan Project town of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, received a 2017 Outstanding Achievement in Poetry Award from the Wisconsin Library Association. Her work has appeared recently in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Ascent*, and *Appalachia*.

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