



Burne-Jones

LOVE POEM

Veiled behind your shimmering cat's-eye cover, ah! Why, tender inspired one, have you selected the lowly fibers of my heart? Have you never surprised the instinctive, itinerant blinking of my soul's central corporation? Do you really believe that faithful morality is a secret one suffers in particular?

Shall my healthy glances, no longer perish under the arid influence of your dark pupils?

No, it is not so, it shall never be, for I keep watch in society over the unanimous captivity of the original organs and I know that in accepting the general superiority of the prophetic organization, your heart will never dare to take hold of mine.

Therefore, fixing upon you my reverences and surveillances, I smokescreeningly tell you these groaning words: "Let us fear the senses."

— GISELE PRASSINOS
(who was fourteen years old when she wrote this poem.)

DREAMING MOTHER

Outside the kitchen window paper violets bob on your straw hat. We watch you prune peach trees. I imagine telling Father what you never discovered: the men in the family are not who they appear to be. Father will want to protest, he wants to believe appearances.

At the edge of the grove I stand, camera close to my chest. The family arrives in the meadow, it is my fortieth birthday. They hear their own voices, what they want to believe of each other. Exposed, I cannot shoulder the history of this heavy brocade.

In the women's room, you lay shining blades of pruning shears on a marble counter. Coming from behind me, where I've always known you to be, you repair what has been broken. That we might enter the ballroom together.

— DIAN WILLIAMS

COUNTDOWN FOR AN EXPLOSION

All of them staring with their Orphan Annie eyes,
Well Fuck you all, she said.
And she was noted for her elegant beauty
On the society page.

A woman on 19th,
Cries for the lack of it.
A woman on 6th,
Gets paid for faking it.

"How's this all going to end?"
She screamed at the audience.
It was an honest question.
Explosion side-stepped temporarily,
Due to lack of funds.

— KRISTEL McCUBBIN



"I invite friends for conversation, not for mating"—hostess extraordinary Emerald Cunard, from a drawing by Marjorie, Marchioness of Anglesey ("Emerald and Nancy" by Daphne Fielding, Eyre & Spottiswoode 1968).

VERA, VERA, QUITE CONTRARY

Though Vera was one of those enviable "modern women" who had everything at her disposal (money, talent, taste), there existed a perverse demon somewhere inside her that kept many pleasant events in her life from being perfectly pleasant. If she gave a dinner party, for instance, the food would be excellent, the plates warmed, the cutlery and the tablecloth of aesthetic interest, the wine carefully chosen and served at just the right temperature, the conversation either haunting or slightly ribald and always mildly dangerous... but then she would always go and ruin the total effect. By serving cookies still in their Pepperidge Farm wrapper, or presenting fruit still sealed in its supermarket cellophane. Or some such thing. "It is her way of refusing, ultimately, to serve," some said; others claimed it was an affectation, the kind that makes a certain kind of rich person arrive at your house in a tattered sweater, and others — these being the ones who loved Vera, either secretly or openly — claimed she screwed up her own best effects out of a deep modesty and a horror of being overwhelmed by praise.

— GAIL GODWIN

THE FISHERMEN

We are the fishermen, breaking bars, the whole spectrum of bars,
With the sea-sickened boat pullers and,
the lost cannon balls.
Fresh air and currents tangled deep in floats, the Sea...
Our Diety with Its meaningful metaphors lingering
in the linings of the landlocked closets of the fishermen's
widows.

The boat lists. Water is always seeping through the garboard seams.
All boats, the steel and the tupperware rigs alike are...
continually sinking.
We stand a hagridden watch.
We see the barometer through a shattered glass, briefly,
smashing boats on rocky jetty lend... an awful sound.
Breaking glass, snapping planks — We are the fishermen
holding on to keels for our lives; fighting that infinite moorage.

— REBEL CAPT., JOVEE DEE III, DOCK #7



Alice Ann Petrie

