



JIMMY HATLO

POETRY

BRIEF GENTLE NEIGHBOR (AFTER THE RAPE)

Have you moved?
It is not possible to tell what lies
behind your covered windows,
some of you perhaps still there
hidden behind the ragged blue shade I
gave you, diffidently, to keep you safe
from all the tiger eyes I feared
would devour you, one way or another.

The wreath you made is still in the window.
Have you left it there, unable to touch its irony,
the bitter hour you spent with the stranger,
the wreath staring at you helpless
that used to cheer you toward Christmas?

Before you pounded on my door that morning
quivering, barefoot, naked beneath your thin jacket,
violated beyond recall, I had feared for you.
Something about your eyes moved too fast,
your shoulders carried too high as though shivering,
some animal velvet about you always.

You are gone with the memory of that stranger
locked into your cells.

Are your eyes moving faster, your shoulders tighter?
Do you live now in others' houses with others' wreaths
woven safe from the quick cold hands of thieves?

~ELIZABETH HOBBS

EVEN A WOLF NEEDS LOVE

Bitch me out, don't understand me,
too many nights alone,
make infatuation's fired furnace
howl behind a harried heart.

I feel a wolfen-woman, trusting
rarely very long in love.
Clear claws of truth tear
through words and reveal bony lies.

Off came my shirt when love was life,
it fit the laughing landscape.
Now, sensuous sceneries breathe
the wintry wind of change.

So I run before the corner closes
and instinct's instant reason
prove the brazen bitch
you want to be.

Love will free me from its fangs
and lick my wounds with time,
its tongue is long and wet and warm.
Friend, it is a wolf-bitch.

~RACHEL WYNN

WHILE THEY WERE WARRING

While they were warring
a garden was being tended
cupped hands, dirt sliding
in between fingers
in electric connection
flesh to soil.

While they were warring
a household was running smoothly
beds were made, dishes done
in between minutes
in electric connection
heart to heart.

While they were warring
spinning wheels were whirring
mending brokens, embroidering hope
in between breaths
in electric connection
flax to gold.

While they were warring
frightened eyes were flashing
making stop signs, daring smiles
in between boxes
in electric connection
hands to hold
hands to hold.

~THEDA SPRACKLIN

A CONGRESS OF WE THE PEOPLE

The people crowd in and snap
at each other with alligator jaws
hungry for space. The shorter ones rise
on the tips of their toes
hoping for a better look.
The greedy bullish ones in front
gather stones for throwing.

The sea of faces claims originality
and refutes that the repeated waves
of similitude eyes and noses
are merely recurring tides of the mass.
They repeat the currents circulating
among themselves — *I think for myself* —
and look to each other for approval.

Some march to the clinking
of self-congratulatory medals.
Others shuffle along to temporary
lines drawn in the sand.
The awards ceremony rewards
one person among them with sacrifice.
They did their part in getting
one to do all the giving.
Forming a more perfect union appears
selfless.

Whether this one stands apart
from the crowd does not matter.
This person may or may not matter.
Who decides what matters in this world?
The victim of sacrifice decides nothing
as the stone-clutching front line readies itself.
Death of this kind never finds itself ready
when we forget what we love.

~JOHN A. FIFE

THE BIRDS & COLUMBUS

"The Journal shows that the birds of North America
deserve the credit.

~SAMUEL ELIOT MORRISON

First far out from any shore
he thought them land birds —
the arctic tern, the reed-tail, the petrel
residing in the long spaces of the sea —
and believed he sailed between islands.

Later, though he had determined a course due west
he turned south to follow them
the land birds, migrants in October,
all crowding south,
whole clouds of ducks and geese,
thrushes, vireos, swallows,
flashes of hummingbirds and golden plover,
and nights, the bobolink.

He had heard somewhere
that birds are good to follow.
And so he did,
missing by this simple
turn of the wheel
the Gulf Stream
relentlessly pushing northward
to the reefs off Hatteras.

But here, a crown of islands,
a world for taking.

~ANN STANFORD

THE SOULS OF OLD MEN

The souls of old men sit
Within their old, corrupted bodies.
How oppressed the poor things are
And how they tire of the wretched life
Which they drag on.
How they tremble lest they lose it,
And how they love it,
The confused and contradictory souls
Which sit — tragicomic —
In their old and disappointed skins.

~KONSTANTINOS LARDAS

FOR 'NON'

What makes the world go wrong?
Go around? Love doesn't! Not really.
He's a queer one — that one.
He wears his knickers over his knackers
and he natters on about nothing.
He's a strange one! I wouldn't
let him marry my daughter. Or son.
Madness lurks in every mind, even
Bishop Tutu's. I wanta wear a tutu!
Homicide hides in every heart, even
John the Baptist's. Off with his head!
The world is a place of wish. Words
mean little more than nothing less.
The world washes away wisdom like
a whale festering upon the beach.
It's as though the glimmerings
of a star reached us too late.
At last! We're lost on Mars,
and the bars are closed. Kiss me,
mate! I had a date with destiny
and missed the boat to Astoria.
I am awash in a sea of farce
and tragedy. Ahoy! My salmon brother.
The waters of the mighty Columbia
are putrid with chemicals and radiation
from Hanford nuclear reservation.
Save the baby lesbian sturgeon! She'll
change her sex when her time comes.
The Queen could've been a king, Bob
Dylan — except her cunt fell short
of hip hop. Of hope. Dance with me,
Henry! The world washes away wisdom.

~WALT CURTIS

W.C. NOTE:

Portland poets Robin Rosemond and myself
readsome poetry one Saturday night at the Voodoo
Room in Astoria. Retta Christie and the Cowboys were
playing tunes. We were treated okay, and I loved
talking with the young waiter with earrings down from
Alaska, Sean. His nickname he said was 'Non', and he
was a writer too. When you visit a strange place like
Astoria of worn-down history, Finns and Wobblies and
out of work men down on their luck — something breaks
loose inside. And Uriah the fierce chef told me all sturgeon
change their sex to female after a certain age. So they
have plenty of eggs to lay? I just turned 61. And that's
where this poem came from.

Every time I go to the Coast I go mad — or get
drunk! The sound of the ocean roaring in my ears. Astoria
is the oldest town in Oregon, and Oregon is at the end of
the USA. Thank the Tao!