

# POETS' CORNER

## THE BLUE MOON TAVERN, CIRCA 1990

The wall across from me is plastered with stuff that's been there a long, long time: formal 1910 portraits a generic postcard from Montana, bar codes and all, another from New Mexico, a view of Deception Pass next to a Smithsonian cover, and a big map of the British Isles with someone's ten-speed propped up on Scotland, "EAT THE RICH" in red.

I can breathe in here though I hadn't expected to. I just wanted to run in and out in search of my past, but it must have been the smoke of the Rainbow next door that I escaped so often with my eyes streaming.

It doesn't matter really whether I was ever here. It doesn't matter who was here or how different everyone is from me, or how many legends hang thick in this air.

For a while I just need to come here every day. I just need to sit at every table and look at every thing I never cared about even then.

I want to drink my coffee here while I can, where the turnover is slow and nobody's polishing anything.

Elizabeth Hobbs

## VIEWPOINTS

We could blow up the moon, he said. That would change everything. She of course agreed, shuddering. He grew excited, seeing his plan as progress, moderating the seasons and the weather, and new Eden.

She remembered the wide beach when the moon-driven tide retreats leaving a smooth warm bed with light enough for tracing the spidery-silk roads love travels.

She closed her eyes to the blithe darkness he created and mourned the loss of moonrise, the silver hope hanging in night trees--

Elizabeth Hobbs  
May 23, 1992

## BAPTISM

They named you Ophelia, lovely liquid name, though they didn't know what it meant. And when your hair was long enough to float, they found a tall thin man of God to hold you under the waters of a muddy stream until you knew that sin was not to be trifled with but sanctity made the chest ache and the breath come hard.

Ophelia, sent harshly into the universal nunnery, expand your lungs, braid up your streaming hair. Swim harder away.

Elizabeth Hobbs  
May 14, 1988

## LETTER

I left you at seven this morning in the parking lot of the bakery, a warm wind from the ocean and the darkness as companions.

I drove up highway 26 with the smell of your whisky and tobacco permeating my car, my clothes, And then I heard that Hugo died, and, they said, at the height.

Warm from your bed, I find it hard to believe that Hugo will no longer write of lovers, or drunks he suffers for.

I never got to argue with him as I do with you about the nature of pain and the pleasure some poets get from it.

But I would probably have failed with him as I do with you. I could only have watched him let his vision extract its last bitter price.

I don't even know what more I want to tell you.

There's no ending to this letter, no ending to our struggle to resist each other's vision even while we keep on wishing to be seen.

Elizabeth Hobbs

## Lost and Found

J. Richert

This ocean loves pretty things You've heard of sailors lured from their shipboard watch, Seen beachfront dreamhomes pulled from their foundations But small things don't escape her notice either. Every summer I add a piece of jewelry to her trove, Thinking myself the keeper When I was only the bearer.

Like a fool I return each year bringing gifts A blown glass bottle on a silk cord, Half a pair of hammered silver squares And this year a thin strand of turquoise beads. In my distraction she tripped the clasp And the trick went unnoticed But true to my race, human as I am I drug myself from sleep Determined to keep what was mine And traced my way as best I could There, standing before her sunrise glory She dared me to shuffle head down Seeking a trifle in the sand I persisted.

She turned her head and cast a thousand shadows Through the morning's prism. How much do you love this vanity? I scowl and shake my fist and hurry out of sight.

Oh I know of the beachcombing horde, With senses tuned to bits of shell And bargains in the shops And I eye the seabird sidewise Imagining a knotted treasure in the gut Like the gold ring in Solomon's fish.

But I know it was her, For when I got home I found this poem in my pocket.

## SHE WHOM I DEEM BEAUTIFUL

finds an old snapshot she cannot believe to be herself. She is amazed to find her young self lovely.

Forty years of slow looking have not led her to value her exquisite porcelain present. And thus I ask her:

Was the Ming vase more delicate when newly fired, the Rembrandt more to be prized before the ink was dry?

Elizabeth Hobbs  
May 17, 1995



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