

SUSAN AYRES

Sage

*Why should a man die whilst
sage grows in his garden?*

— medieval saying

Now at the age of hiding
your true age from new colleagues
and friends,
having young children when
you should be planning
your retirement,
what have you gotten yourself into?
What else would you be doing?
It's easy to imagine the dinners,
the trips—
but are those childless couples
happy? What keeps their nights
sleepless? What keeps them young?

I meet you for lunch
and while we exchange interesting
stories, I silently wonder if all couples
meeting this way
try to make each minute count
double. We look like two people
hungry to know each other
the food/sex connection strong.
You know the look.

But we aren't on our first date.
It's an old story, how children changed
our lives.
My career fizzled like
the tail of a comet, while yours
exploded into a new galaxy.

I have time to garden, and plant timeless
perennials and herbs:

borage
foxglove
lavender
betony
echinacea
sage
rosemary
basil
roses.

The children traipse
after me like a cure
for old-age.

The Beauty Bar

Botox? Pink?

“Pink, Powerful, Legal”?

A beauty bar sponsored by the local bar.

Style show.

Skincare.

Hair removal.

What is this?

Judith Butler, in her words:

“gender ontologies always operate
within established political contexts
*as normative injunctions, determining
what qualifies as intelligible sex . . .*”

A Stepford Wife in the courtroom,
legal and powerful
and beautiful in the eyes of the Father.

The parody, pastiche of woman,
parody “*of the very notion of an original.*”

Here we go again.

Isn't this an old story?
The hegemonic language of lack.

The “Other’ of the always-already-masculine subject.”
The Beauty Bar inscribes “the law of their desire.”
Another pink invitation.

I must still be in Texas
where it's law and the politics of the body.

The only thing to do is to attend.

**ATTENTION LADY LAWYERS: Attend the Beauty Bar,
Attend the Law Firm Boutique, Attend the Neiman Marcus Event.**

**“[T]here is a subversive laughter in the pastiche-effect
of parodic practices in which the original,
the authentic, and the real are themselves constituted
as effect.”**

**Twenty bucks guarantees
we will be beautiful
before the Law.**

**Note: The Judith Butler quotes are from Judith Butler, *Gender
Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 1990).**