

POETRY

by

LILLIAN BAKER KENNEDY

Tomorrow in the Mountains of Vermont

In the park in New York City, one soldier
staggered through the voices,
shrugs off the marble tribute.
Luck lies as a shroud
on survivors' shoulders.

In the subway, the floor is crowded
with shadows in the train's light.
The headlight stalks us
in the tunnel's dark.
We grope for each other,
touch hands,
just the backs of fingers
brushing as backs turn.

We rise like rivers
to taxis and sirens
crossing bridge spans
over rivers dark.

We had hoped to be home, but
again we travel.
No open sea in sight.

On the island, life is thinner.
Rocks push up through sparse grasses,
short and brittle like letters to
unforgiven relatives.

In the mist that blurs horizon's line,
all we left
even those gone
startle us back
with horns.
As graybeards, we go on.

The heart has to wander or it withers
like the body that gets frail.
The hand shakes.
The pen pauses

before the next pass over the footbridge,
that high wire, the mouth to mouth of thought,
taste our own mouths and find there – laughter.

Motes sparkle
in the early morning light
or settle
behind the black mirror
where the parchment trembles.
Every sea has a mouth to the river.
Say a small prayer to minister,
Let them be whole tonight.

Jack Nicholson

I want to be a poet like Jack Nicholson
with a wink that cuts straight to the nerve,
a little scheming under sighing laissez-faire.
My occasional unfaithfulness forgivable
even essential to who I am,
the wolf who raises eyebrows in surprise
when fate has struck the fatal blow,
then slowly, broadly grins.

Between Here and Ireland

My dentist, born on Danforth Street,
once told me he traveled to Ireland
There, returned home.

I walk MacNair
past the granite rocks,
avoiding the paved path
littered with human spoor.
We journey further east.

Here, the sunrise still speaks
though the bay is gray and flat.
Creidne stirs.
Her father, banished to night.
My hound, surely a Finn,
frolics in the sand, and backtalks
every effort to rein him in.

The wind blistering my face,
I call upon my kin,
big Celtic women with auburn hair
flowing down to their waist.
Women who knew
how to dance around a fire,
sniff the air for traitors,
women who stood up to their men
who loved them for it.

At the faintest hint of morning,
on the furthest edge of land,
I summon forth a company
to collect these hyacinths
strewn on the sea
between here and Ireland.

Bar Admission

On the day I was admitted
to the bar
they led me to
the Law Court chamber.
The curtain opened and
suddenly,
I thought of Oz.
Once again,
no wizards.

Dead Winter

All of your tears turned to icicles,
barbed roofs where we remain
imprisoned.
I could freeze to death
in this glittering sun.

Mother, I'm cold.
Caress my cheeks.
Whisper softly.
I want to hear tinkling chimes
not the furious bass of the buoy.

I'm numb.
No wardrobe shields me.
Strangling scarf,
my fingers blunted with mittens.
I have only my soles to walk on.
Awkward orphan toddling
around the frigid landscape
of your rage.

Snow in Spring

Snow drifts in dream.
Pine trees toss their tousled ends.
The powdery flakes cling
gently to the screen.
The drifts are high.
There's no more room for it.
This snow comes softly
like a friend who enters
tentatively and asks
"May I visit?"

Today my only companions
patient rose branches
staunchly set with arms up stretched
holding forth their dark red hips.
Ancient gnarled kin
I love your tender blossoms,
but today I love you more
for your stark strength
and your stalwart presence
in this snow in spring.

Lillian Baker Kennedy is a Maine native, a graduate of the University of Southern Maine where she majored in philosophy and the University of Maine School of Law where she obtained her J.D. degree. Kennedy has an active domestic relations practice in Lewiston, Maine. She created and maintains a website, "Hearsay: Poetry Written by Lawyers" which can be found at: <www.lawyerpoetry.com>

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