

LES DEUX SAINTS DE MONTREAL

Her black bra is on the dresser,
wool hand-me-down coat on my back.
St. Lawrence prays for a confessor,
St. Catherine begs to differ and leads the attack.

The army of migrant workers are ready.
“No devil in Montreal!”
The snow was fast and steady,
each motel watched it fall.

Sheltered down in the basement of her computer house,
under surveillance of a high-end store,
edge of Chinatown, quiet as a church mouse,
I pray for St. Lawrence, St. Catherine, and migrants of the war.

A FEW THOUSAND WORDS

The sun has gone to sleep in a heap of summer dresses.
The Mexican moon has not risen from her foldout bed
for the 9 below zero night shift.
Please lift the lights in the apartment windows of our village.
They are our only lonely guide
through the charcoal cold of her bitchy mysteries.
They will shine and illuminate unshaven black thighs
up to her royal blue undergarments,
waiting for handsome altar boys who are really young dykes
with switch blades concealed under their cloaks
to light the orphan stars.

Smoke by your train soaked window.
My art history class was drawing female nudes
that would have given Picasso a hard-on
and make Big Momma Horton's cootchie wet.

While bathing in semi-expensive red wine,
we all took turns as model and observer.
One stripped slowly with red cheeks,
the other returned from the washroom wearing nothing but a bowler hat.
Both beautiful like a Coney Island Ferris wheel,
adorable like foxes in the chicken coop.
Have you ever seen a hobo naked?
He looks like a millionaire.

From the 4th floor balcony,
a disfigured cat growls in a car-width wide alleyway below,
by the light blue "smells like teen spirit" dumpster,
a dirty rose in its yellow teeth and soon in its hungry belly,
while the big-breasted moon climbs the stairs to her post.

She casually smiles in the modern world darkness,
taking the universe by storm.

Now the women are clothed and silent in separate rooms
while the man pounds on a typewriter on the fire escape
like Father Time.

Sadly, the sketching class is no longer oil based and naked
in a 3 penny pencil drawing opera
of see-through apron excitement.

But look out your train soaked window.
You can read about a period in art history
that undressed by lamp light,
right here in our tiny village.

MAN SITTING BESIDE ME AT A CAMPFIRE

I asked him if he was a musician;
he said, “No,”
but added, “I write some poetry, though.”
Later in the evening
I asked when he started writing.
He replied, “When my wife left me,”
then looked into the fire as it crackled and warmed us in the rain
and added,
“It was also around the same time
I started hanging out with criminals.”

ARCTIC WIND

My woman has a tattoo on her back
no one sees.

It only appears when my hand glides down from the bottom of her neck
to the imprint on her skin of a tightly-worn belt.
It's fine-line detailed, giant monarch butterfly wings.

As we make love, they flap like a helicopter propeller,
fanning our bodies like arctic wind,
or an open ice box.

As we lie in bed after kissing the inside of earlobes
with alarm clock's radio,
moonshine bottle dry,
smoking satisfied,
I watch the ink run
all Halloween orange
and black licorice blue,
dripping down to her sweet ass
which of course I squeeze,
her wings now hidden from the world.

BIRD CAGE

She had an old barrelhouse upright,
what piano tuners call a bird cage.
They're too old to fix,
beyond repair,
are only useful to tone deaf fugitives
or as muted decoration.

There are always many trinkets on these barrelhouse birdcages:
pictures in frames,
some loose,
a jar of pennies,
junk pail,
little ceramic animals,
and a light coat of dust on the piano's driveway.

The lid is always down,
so the black and white keys
are sleeping like little girl dolls
under wooden blankets.

I'm in my toque and scarf,
staring at this musical family heirloom.
"Do you know how to orchestrate such a contraption?" she asks.
"Not very well," I reply.
"I can bang out a few chords, but no ragtime rabbit-out-of-the-hat tricks."

Almost like she was a man
who just helped his buddy move,
or who had just mowed many miles of lawns,
or like she was Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire*,
she nonchalantly removes her shirt
in this living of living rooms
of old furniture