

Around the beginning of every New Year I try to go through links where my work has been published. The following appeared in the site WritingRaw.com in 2015. Unfortunately it is no longer showing online.

Mother, Time

What is the trick
to freeze, to rewind?
Fluid, fluid, it all is
but I would re-do life,
to keep it, even break arms
by holding for the irresistible
let-go
begins to seem thievery...

Flow, all is flux &
new openings to live with death
surpassed, but does the flesh have faith?
I believe in its spirit, Mother, a held
photo of you with my face &
your daughter's in your swimming cap
when you were twenty-one...

In that time we could be each other,
the framed flight of souls
scrapbook pages link
as much as blood, & in transit,
I apprehend this goodness, the cycles
of passage, the seasons, with all
as passing ...

Stay, I say yet,
feel the flood, reel the waves, & us,
all flashes wholly brought back alive.

So love knows its heritage & nothing stops,
but Mother, Time,
I want the depths to slow up some,
until lightness, the savored, the tasted breath,
that shall be saved too.

Warriors

Have the bagpipes begun?

This quill issues jigs, woven
tambourine nosegays, all small
exuberant blurs
now titanium, now laces undone,
bodices falling to milk silk flesh
on pasture green...

Is it royal then, ceremonious,
to have a warrior's hand, worn
and tired from battle
presently adept, gentle upon spirit,
spirit drifting from skin?

Here is its navigation:
a soft dispersion of violets
fishbowl flung after too brief
yearly excursions
in a wilderness.

Spread now, now resurrected,
un-kenneled, these sweet maize husk
sheets, these fingers enveloped, are
a dervish, Celtic, momentarily

corresponding.

"It's a long long story to tell/And I can only show you my hell... Broken mirror/White terror... It's that faint faint sound of the childhood bell/Ringing in my soul."

Yoko Ono, Kiss Kiss Kiss

Recap

It was reported
that of all violent crimes
in the United States
those against gays
had a particular rage...

Rage, crimes reported
against nature, against flesh——
castration, decapitation, missing
penis, missing head
& the bodies, sexually suspect, found
found on fire
in a nearby garbage bin...

Missing, crimes reported, rage,
rage, where did it begin?

Begin, look on, look long, the school
yard of darts, the whistling, the whine,
the wars of our childhoods, child & back further,
back beyond oppression keening
beneath civilized civilized...

Civil, civil——bell, where you've been
& are ringing still, also lifts wings, has lifted——
souls, the souls risen, day after day, resistance,
the attempts at making sense, making
love Gus

of gloom, goof, be goofy, these instants
of silliness...serene...so good...you make me
laugh, laugh, live...grace in crazed times...
working the windshield wiper with a clothespin,
a clothes...our driving & rain coming in...in
the wrong direction...up a one way...a runway...
our faces, streets... streets & stories...funny

human, of glass, of bark, of sky & some
violence has a bias for, & some
tell jokes, whisper peace, keep
the flame round
round the fire
the fire (kiss kiss, put your head)
on both sides (back on) burns long.

REMEMBER REMEMBER

Cobweb against snow, a formation
from a wind which swept on.
So the pattern approaches & goes, goes off...
the skeletal residue of a spider's entrails.
Those tendrils drift as wind distributes,
continuing, continuing, spun currents of air...

Here in this room what I remember is floating.
I had scenes in focus, photos in mind.
From chair to chair, fastidious I perched,
preparing & plotting, an architect
trying to see the realization of dreams.
Finally I found the place where the light
filtered just right, decisively took aim
& clicked the shutter in...

The pictures never did
live up to their original intentions though.
They came out fingered & fuzzy, something
integral lost in translation:
the spirit which possessed fascination
& held, suspended, the bright rare dust.

Being sentimental, I recall
a snap shot I took of my brother
while phoning a friend.
He stretched floor length
beneath the table,
his own camera flashing a polar-white bulb
at the cat.

Now that animal's dead
& he's as ever estranged, though made
surprisingly close by this old picture's evidence,
different & pure with irony's bite.

If you look closely life's legacy's right there:
the snow-steeped web in some vacant window,

the ghost of a spider which was everything's sum,
the breeze & the dust, the air, the air!

Remember, remember. We bear what we are.

Matthew's Doe

Brown softness, warmth's furry coat,
her nostrils sniffing and fogging,
sensing bones frozen with pain
like I was one of her own, fawn-sized
for the flanks settling down, belly-close
as if to show there was nothing more
to be afraid of despite the lonely night's
black length, and strange frigid numbness
my wrists knew as burning rope.

Perhaps the post I was tied to
reminded her of some similar sight:
distant buck of hoisted girth
behind a barn through fields deathly still.

Suddenly would come the scent of that
even as breeze yet stirred the wheat,
breeze as a messenger for the iron blood smell.

My hunters left me to be carrion for crows,
not finishing the job mercifully, not at all efficient,
even if taking my shoes for chill to grip me with its vice,
until her shape drew off the raw pall.

How such shelter can be consoling kindness
even when just innocent animal instinct,
the other side of what evil men do.

That's why there were clear tracks under my eyes
where blood stains dried and darker bruises welled.

She left me way past daybreak, mama,
when the uniformed one came
taking her place
for the long voyage back home.

(I am also attaching a poetry-art hybrid of "Matthew's Doe", a piece done for Matthew Shepard since my hybrid work seems to annoy editors but since the piece was done for the Shepard family I would prefer not to "hide it under a bushel" waiting for editorial validation.)