

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Amélie Frank: Two Poems

Amélie Frank · Wednesday, August 12th, 2015

Los Angeles native Amélie Frank has authored five poetry collections, including *Doing Time on Planet Billy Bob* (Inevitable Press). Her work has appeared in numerous local, national, and international publications, including *Art/Life*, *Lummox Journal*, *Blue Arc West*, *Sparring with Beatnik Ghosts*, and the new anthology *Wide Awake*. Co-founder of the Sacred Beverage Press, she produced the acclaimed literary journal *Blue Satellite*. She has been honored by Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center and the City of Los Angeles for her work in the Southern California poetry community. Her biography appears in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who of American Women*.

(to the Woman who named her husband on an AOL newsgroup in case she turned up dead)

Become the water of a cactus, sleeping juice in the darkest holds of the plant
and his horror of the spines will deny his parched and panting mouth
Become a horny-toad, bleeding at the eyes to scare up supper,
and he won't even want to look at you
Become a mimicry of the desert entire: salt flats, sidewinders, skeletons collapsed
and he will get lost, fail to ask for directions, and die

Become cochlear, like a sea snail embedded in the tides,
and he will turn up his nose at you, like seafood, and move on
Become the pinpricks of a sandpiper's footprints,
and he will mistake you for the breath bubbles of little white crabs
Become translucent as the stranded jelly box,
and he will avoid planting his heel in your back

Become as disorienting as a lark's gibber bouncing off the canyon,
and he will blink dimly and search in the wrong direction
Become a locust, poised to strip the landscape
and he will flee the Biblical retribution of your appetite
Become ample, like wheat,
and he may pass above and through the billion stalks of you,
oblivious as the wind and as empty.

What the Tourmaline Angel Brought

(for Laurel Greenstein)

She promises me that there are good things
 waiting to burst through the door
 Good things, she says
 Once I am ready to receive them
 I think I hear sugarplum fairies scratching at the dome
 I cannot imagine what they look like
 —lace-winged things, aren't they?
 Abundance, she says, and a day when all the weeping will cease
 Ah, faith, faith that there is goodness waiting in the wings
 All that needs be done is to fold it all over
 Like a coverlet in early spring
 And hand it over to God
 That alone terrifies me
 I'm very bad at folding things
 God might not approve of the dire lack of crisp corners
 In the way I make my bed
 In the way I make my head
 It's not tidy
 But faith, faith will see it all through
 She promises
 Try not to believe what you have known all your life
 What you have known is a lie, she says
 What you have known is a sickness of the world
 A sickness that cannot see your own beauty
 A sickness that says I laid down to sleep when I was five
 And no one ever came to wake me
 Everyone was tapped on the shoulder to rise
 Except me
 Faith will tap me on the shoulder, she says
 How will I know that it's not Satan tapping? I ask
 Because it has always been Satan tapping up to this point
 She tells me
 And you thought you were waking and loved him
 Thinking him an angel, and you weren't wrong
 He was, once, until he discovered Newton's Law
 And he became, instead, everything a man eats and drinks
 Everything a man consumes and throws away
 Everything that causes a little girl to lie down to sleep
 And remain unawakened for four decades
 Dreaming of rewards like plums and husbands
 She says not to worry
 In time, all meaning will be revealed
 All naps will be ended, and . . . ?

And all will benefit when your eyes are truly opened
She says this
I have to believe her
I have to believe something with lace wings scratches at the dome
Faith says to inhale
Faith says open your eyes
Faith says I will awaken at any moment.
I have to, faith says.
The world depends on it.

(Author photo by Alexis Rhone Fancher)

This entry was posted on Wednesday, August 12th, 2015 at 1:19 pm and is filed under [Poetry](#).
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