

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Anne Elezabeth Pluto: Three Poems

Anne Elezabeth Pluto · Thursday, December 1st, 2022

### Fog

Dove gray farm weather  
inside the house wearing  
a sweater – summer solstice  
now over – the days no longer  
rain in the forecast – horses stamp  
in the barn later – led out  
to be saddled – my hair in my eyes  
fog in the morning – rolls over  
by the kitchen window holding  
the luminous cups – waiting  
for my father – asleep upstairs  
beside my mother – the house  
the house – its own silent entity  
grandfather in the big garden  
turning over the earth – grandmother  
whispering to the icons – I am  
dreaming, standing – parting the  
curtains to see the dove gray fog lift  
praying for sun – and the world  
to roll over.

\*

### Brighton Beach Was Never Venice

*for Lisa Levine*

Green water – South pacific  
or Adriatic – dream water  
Grand Canal to Carnival.  
the masks they wore were  
not *Made in Italy* intermittent

Mother tender water masks  
 where they could not go – Brighton Beach  
 it beckons still – water wave  
 crashing save, still from the rocky  
 reef refuge – the teeming shoreline  
 left behind – an ocean supported  
 surrendered between two world  
 wars and a generation, lost  
 they swam with the fishes, watched  
 the man in white, who sold knishes  
 and fed us from their wedding  
 dishes – sea salty air and shoulders  
 bare – Brighton Beach  
 was never Venice.

\*

## **I have been to Samarqand**

*for my father*

Two years ago  
 May now as you made yourself  
 ready for death I wanted to  
 remain, relieve her of her duty  
 and be a good daughter.  
 You sent me home  
 to die with her  
 alone.

I have been to Samarqand  
 that final time  
 a journey by water  
 the dream geography more full  
 than life, the mosque, the church  
 the covered women singing  
 the Stations of the Cross  
 the goblin boat to take me back  
 by morning  
 I travel by train, north and walk  
 to the park, it's hot and burning  
 to see the icons at the Met  
 to look into the eyes of each  
 and every opalescent Virgin  
 in the house of the father  
 she guides the souls in comfort to Samarra.  
 Her eyes

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follow me, at home

I present you a gift  
war traveler  
who prayed  
at every house of the father  
St. Sophia's in Kiev,  
the Friday Mosque of Tashkent,  
the Bucharian Synagogue on Sepyornaya Street  
the tomb of the Prophet Daniel where his stolen  
bones grow the stops along the bloody way  
in Iran, Iraq, in Syria  
then Lebanon, in Egypt  
and Palestine,  
in Bethlehem at the Church of the Nativity  
where the Ottoman Turks  
had made the doorways four feet high  
to keep the wild horsemen out  
to Jerusalem  
where they meet God as three  
a trinity of one almighty  
city to destroy the houses of the father  
a caravansary on the journey  
backwards to Samarra  
you put messages in the wall  
went into the Holy Sepulcher  
and stumbled along the Viva Dolorosa  
saw the dome of the rock  
where Mohammed rode  
a winged stallion to Heaven  
across the Mediterranean  
in Monte Casino you protected  
the mountain  
then the monastery  
and in Rome  
lifted your face to the ceiling  
of the Sistine Chapel.

Now hear  
the word of God  
as the pain goes through  
you like hot lead  
as your bones move  
lengthwise into sleep upon the bed.  
I have brought your last book  
in prescience and redemption  
in secret and in silence  
open it, alone, look  
study the compassionate

face of Mary  
the distant face of Christ  
the icons  
we cannot escape  
imprinted on us since  
baptism, I hear you  
pray and I pray too  
for your life that spanned  
the century  
let the light hold fast  
enter Hagia Sophia  
the final house of the father  
go then, backwards to Samarra  
leave your shoes at the door  
see Christ who never was  
removed before your destiny  
is achieved, explore.

A rise, and go  
Vladimir  
for the kingdom of Heaven  
is upon you.

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