Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

# Beate Sigriddaughter: Three Poems

Beate Sigriddaughter · Wednesday, August 1st, 2018

## Pieta

I.

A woman at work solicits paperbacks
for our soldiers, especially action/suspense.
I feel for her, wanting to help, yet
here I sit trapped in my white marble grief
for our sons that are always so broken.
Often it feels we lose our men
long before they enlist in their dreams
of glory that we haven't healed
in more than ten thousand years.

II.

In Papua New Guinea women make a pact
to slay their male babies, as there seems
to be no other way to stop a brutal war
of already far too many generations.
At this point men in the west are crying "murder."
Would you rather wait till they all grow up
and kill each other properly then?

III.

In Israel they are willing to imprison
high school kids who do not want to
kill and do not want to die.

IV.

You say it is too difficult to simply withdraw
and let go of righteous dreams.
You say I don't understand the staggering
complexities.
Do you believe that it is easier to simply die?

V.

Come home, my love, and live.
I want you in the fields beside me,
not huddling in far-away trenches. I want you
to climb with me the narrow path toward
intelligence with its dangerous cliffs
and its breathtaking vistas.
I don’t want you on my lap,
broken for any reason.
Come home, my son, my brother,
my father, my husband.
Come home, my love, and live.

*

## Normal

This then is the danger, when
the crushing heel of disdain
for women is so normal and
we live so awkwardly inured to it,
that we no longer even notice.
Indignant, I show a young woman
an ad for a cute nostalgic poster,
“Women Haters Club,” printed
in a catalog designed to sell
primarily to women, and she
looks at me with large bewildered
eyes: What is your point?
I watch young women, proud,
intelligent, give in to condescending
flirtations. It works. It earns them
larger tips. I watch myself
simper and defer. It works. Yes.
Don’t get me started on pornography.
Where do we live that it is pleasant
here, and normal, for a man to look
at women who look vulnerable,
for sure, and preferably dim-witted
as well? It is a bad, bad dream
in which I stumble naked on
the high heels of obedience, my finger
at my mouth, tongue lolling, while
the steady acid of contempt
keeps dripping and corroding me
like rust.

*

## The Timing

I saw the perfect maple leaf
one day, spread in the sun.
I walked three paces, then
I turned to pick it up.
The wind had claimed it away.
Love, too, comes like a leaf,
a sunrise, or a rose. You cannot
say: Not now. Even a fox
would laugh if you tried
to schedule its trajectory.
All true lovers know this.
If necessary you steal time.
Love does not wait. Here
is my flame. Accept it while
it burns before it fades
away like a neglected muse.
There are other worthwhile things,
of course, friendship, commitment,
duty, but my love is fragile
like a rose, and also steadfast
like the sun, and matchless
like a maple leaf.
Let us not save each other
for special occasions.

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