

Cultural Daily

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Chrys Tobey: Three Poems

Chrys Tobey · Wednesday, May 10th, 2017

Chrys Tobey is the author of the poetry book *A Woman is a Woman is a Woman is a Woman* (Steel Toe Books, 2017). Her poetry has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and published in many print and online literary journals, including *Ploughshares*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *the minnesota review*, *Rattle*, *New Ohio Review* & *Smartish Pace*. Chrys lives and teaches in Portland, Oregon, with her canis familiaris and imaginary goat.

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So Far, It Looks Like I May Live a Long Life

Vivas to those who have failed!

—Walt Whitman

Failed first grade. Almost failed ninth. Failed
to show up. Failed to stop smoking weed. Failed to pay
a parking ticket. And then another. And another.
Failed to write letters when we still wrote letters.
Failed a business. Failed to understand poets
fail at business. Failed my savings account.
Failed to wash the worm from the lettuce. Failed
my first marriage. Failed the man I should've
left my first marriage for. Failed love. Again.
And again. Failed my driver's test, three times—
actually, it was my sister, but genetically speaking.
Failed California. Failed Ohio. Failed Oregon.
Failed to close the stupid blinds as I stepped
into the shower this morning. Failed to do the dishes.
Failed to change the oil. Failed to make love
in a houseboat. Failed to realize there would only
be one night with a houseboat and the Pacific
and her face barely visible under the failing moon.

For the Guy Who Unfriended Me on Facebook After I Got Married

Darling, there were once other ways to go about this –
a letter scribbled with a final *goodbye* – the *e* a hand closing –

stored away in some drawer or box, something I could
open thirty years from now, when I'm considering my regrets.

Or a telephone call – you wouldn't even have to speak; we could
sit in silence, or sigh, until one of us slams down the receiver.

And then, there were more creative ways – once, a past lover
threw eggs at me as I left work, or I saw two men beat each other

like drums until the scream of fire-trucks and ambulances pulled them apart.
When my grandfather remarried, my grandmother sent him one white rose.

Think of all the objections at the altar – you could've been a baritone horn blasting
in the ears of tight-lipped and teary-eyed guests. Oh my dear, we have none of this –

nothing to crumple up, no way to feel the stars burn out in my hands.

One Morning

she woke up and couldn't rub penises from her eyes. She was unsure how this happened. You'd think she was *gettin' around*, as her mother used to say. But no, she was married to a real, genuine penis. Some would say a savory penis. But now she saw penises everywhere: She opened her door to penises promising Jesus. She read magazines full of penises. She turned on the television to penises. All kinds of penises – short penises, fat penises, slim penises. Penises planning infrastructure and coding computers. Brown penises. White penises. Penises pontificating. Penises invading. Stiff penises interviewed by important penises about such seriousness – *Well, Charlie, it's not quite a cold war*. I know – it's hard to imagine. But penises were strung across her mind like holiday lights. Suddenly she saw penises strumming guitars. Penises singing about their own penises. Corporate penises. Elected penises. She was stumped. She went to lunch with a friend who said *You know, most women would've slept with that penis to get ahead*. And she thought, *as if a penis were some kind of pole vault. As if you could climb a penis to the sky*.

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