

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Devon Balwit: Three Poems

Devon Balwit · Wednesday, June 6th, 2018

### Happy Hour

Someone has knit and purled cirrus  
     into weave,                      the lightest angora  
 over backlit blue. I drift and listen to a story  
     of modafinil,                      the way it sustains  
 without sparking irritation, unlike adderall.  
     The fake ID                      has been re-pocketed,  
 tattoos all around. We sip as we would in Europe,  
     intergenerational.              I am one  
 climbing back into youth through an unlatched window,  
     mindful                              of lolling  
 dogs. For years, I've toyed with nothing that couldn't  
     be bought                              at the corner grocery,  
 my mind already a storm-dancing wire. I'm sad, but two's  
     my limit,                              more  
 and tomorrow's a sick headache, a papier-mâché slathering.  
     I am as cool                              as I will ever be—  
 Not very. I admire a lean Mohawk, boot-striding  
     the sidewalk.                      He looks elsewhere,  
 me the wrong gender and old enough to have crowned him,  
     the only way                              he would part  
 my thighs. After each tale, I release a head-turning  
     guffaw,                                      popped  
 like a champagne cork from effervescence.  
     Heads turn,                              but I refuse

to quiet. This room is eclosion, an unseen metamorphosis.

What will I be

when I pay the bill and rise? While not her, exactly,  
surely more than I was.

\*

## The Eve of the Poetry Reading

*Hearing the fierce mask magnify  
The silver limbo of each eye*

— (From Sylvia Plath's "The Fearful")

Am I a Gorgon? I ready myself  
to read to no one, to send out

my baleful eye over empty chairs.  
I say it doesn't matter, dust off

the *audience of one* adage, a lie  
told so often I snicker in my sleeve,

prepare excuses before I need them—  
multiple readings elsewhere,

a lecture series downtown.  
It's practice anyway, at the podium

with my affronted darlings, pushing  
them forwards, like my son, years past,

toward threat. *Be pugnacious, now.*  
*The playground's vicious.*

\*

## Somewhere There Is an Acronym for This

*And my child look at her, face down on the floor,  
Little unstrung puppet, kicking to disappear*

— (Sylvia Plath, "Lesbos")

It happened more than once. The third child left  
somewhere, daycare providers running after,

*You forgot the baby!* Or later still, the baby,  
now a boy, banging on the car door as I pull away.

*Mom!* The children saying something to me  
as my mind wanders. *What? What?*

danced just on the edge of keys? They crap, and  
puke, and cry, days unfurling like toilet paper,

identical, shit-smeared. At some preschool meet  
and greet, a mother says, *I love them more than*

*life itself. There is nothing I'd rather be doing.*  
She's blown her tubes like a bad radio. Me,

there's any number of things I'd rather do,  
stand on a cliff-edge and scream just to hear

the echo. Meanwhile, there's a stink of fat  
and baby crap. I'm packing the hard potatoes

like good clothes. The teacher calls. Then  
the principal. I let the phone go to voice mail.

I should wear tiger pants, I should have an  
affair. Each day, just six uninterrupted hours.

The laundry piles up. We sleep on stained mattresses.  
The children whine about food. I send them

to scavenge neighbor gardens. *Make friends,*  
I say. *Go somewhere.*

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