

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Diane Lockward: Three Poems

Diane Lockward · Wednesday, January 29th, 2014

Diane Lockward is the author of *The Crafty Poet: A Portable Workshop* (Wind Publications, 2013) and three poetry books, most recently *Temptation by Water*. Her previous books are *What Feeds Us*, which received the 2006 Quentin R. Howard Poetry Prize, and *Eve's Red Dress*.

These poems by Diane Lockward first appeared in her second collection, *What Feeds Us* (Wind Publications).

Invective Against the Bumblebee

Escapee from a tight cell, yellow-streaked,
sex-deprived sycophant to a queen,
you have dug divots in my yard
and like a squatter trespassed in my garage.

I despise you for you have swooped down
on my baby boy, harmless on a blanket of lawn,
his belly plumping through his orange stretch suit,
yellow hat over the fuzz of his head.

Though you mistook him for a sunflower,
I do not exonerate you,
for he weeps in my arms, trembles, and drools,
finger swollen like a breakfast sausage.
Now my son knows pain.
Now he fears the grass.

Fat-assed insect! Perverse pedagogue!
Henceforth, may flowers refuse to open for you.
May cats chase you in the garden.
I want you shellacked by rain, pecked by shrikes,
mauled by skunks, paralyzed by early frost.
May farmers douse your wings with pesticide.
May you never again taste the nectar
of purple clover or honeysuckle.
May you pass by an oak tree just in time

to be pissed on by a dog.

And tomorrow may you rest on my table
as I peruse the paper. May you shake
beneath the scarred face of a serial killer.
May you be crushed by the morning news.

Organic Fruit

I want to sing
a song worthy of
the avocado, renegade
fruit, strict individualist, pear
gone crazy. Praise to its skin

like an armadillo's, the refusal
to adulate beauty. Schmoo-shaped
and always face forward, it is what it
is. Kudos to its courage, its inherent love
of democracy. Hosannas for its motley coat,
neither black, brown, nor green, but purple-hued,
like a bruise. Unlike the obstreperous coconut, the

avocado yields to the knife, surrenders its hide of leather,
blade sliding under the skin and stripping the fruit. Praise
to its nakedness posed before me, homely, yellow-green,
and slippery, bottom-heavy like a woman in a Renoir, her
flesh soft velvet. I cup the fruit in my palm, slice and hold,
slice and hold, down to the stone at the core, firm fist at the
center. Pale peridot crescents slip out, like slivers of moon.
Exquisite moment of ripeness! a dash of salt, the first bite
squishes between tongue and palate, eases down my

throat, oozes vitamins and oil. Could anything be more
delicious, more digestible? Plaudits to its versatility,
yummy in Cobb salad, saucy in guacamole, boldly
stuffed with crabmeat. My avocado dangles from
a tree, lifts its puckered face to the sun, pulls
all that light inside. Praise it for being small,
misshapen, and durable. Praise it for
the largeness of its heart.

Linguini

It was always linguini between us.
Linguini with white sauce, or

red sauce, sauce with basil snatched from the garden, oregano rubbed between our palms, a single bay leaf adrift amidst plum tomatoes. Linguini with meatballs, sausage, a side of brascioli. Like lovers trying positions, we enjoyed it every way we could—artichokes, mushrooms, little neck clams, mussels, and calamari—linguini twining and braiding us each to each. Linguini knew of the kisses, the smooches, the molti baci. It was never spaghetti between us, not cappellini, nor farfalle, vermicelli, pappardelle, fettucini, perciatelli, or even tagliarini. Linguini we stabbed, pitched, and twirled on forks, spun round and round on silver spoons. Long, smooth, and always al dente. In dark trattorias, we broke crusty panera, toasted each other—*La dolce vita!*—and sipped Amarone, wrapped ourselves in linguini, briskly boiled, lightly oiled, salted, and lavished with sauce. Bellissimo, paradiso, belle gente! Linguini witnessed our slurping, pulling, and sucking, our unraveling and raveling, chins glistening, napkins tucked like bibs in collars, linguini stuck to lips, hips, and bellies, cheeks flecked with formaggio—parmesan, romano, and shaved pecorino—strands of linguini flung around our necks like two fine silk scarves.

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