

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Dion O'Reilly: Three Poems

Dion O'Reilly · Wednesday, September 2nd, 2020

Why Did I Call My Pig?

I watched my mother call her,
watched my sister too.
My father tried to catch her.
She was quick, my piebald oinker.
Her squeals greased the air.

She knew the jig was up,
ran to the farthest corner, down
by the creek and the steep ravine,
hid in shadows under oak trees,
rooting prickled leaves and acorns
with her wet ringed snout.

My huge baby, companion
on aimless teenage days
when I balanced on the fencepost,
listening to her belly-deep rumble,
stick-scratched her itchy,
thick-skinned back.

The butcher with a rifle,
stood impatient by his Chevy truck,
its hook and chain ready
to haul the limp sow up,
to scrape the skin and slice the stomach
in a thin red line, bowels spilling
glazy as moonstones.

Forgive me. To show off my small power,
I called her—the one she loved—
and she came running.

*

Ex

I glimpsed him leaving Trader Joe's,
 loading his disposable brown bag of stuff
 into his wax-buffed Jag. My ex—
 his face dehydrated now,
 in the way of those old-timey applehead dolls.
 This was the guy
 to whom I cried as we did it—*Take me*
any way you want me. So loud an exaltation
 that it carried for acres—
 into the neighborhood chapel,
 where it shivered the sainted windows.
 All the way into abandoned apartments,
 awakening tweakers with their smoky pipes.
 Into the fragrance of espresso bars
 serving absinthe and squirts of whiskey syrup,
 the pierced baristas pausing
 as they plunged the steamer rod
 into the teased-up milk.
 That's how it is when you're a woman
 in your prime. You vocalize.
 Especially after all the years I spent
 with a man who walked out
 the bedroom door while I waited
 in bra and panties, posing to show
 the curve of my waist, the peach
 lace of my Victoria's Secret—
 my jars of vulva balm going rancid
 on the bedside table.

After my great plague of nothing, the first
 to uncork the fine champagne
 of my lust. There he was again,
 his blotched arms heaving
 Friskies cat food
 onto the smooth leather of his backseat.

*

Another Happiness

Publish your best work, find a decent job.
 Eat some sizzling octopus, the many

kissing tentacles meaty on your tongue.
Success, you think, *Joy!* For a while anyway,
 then it's another mess in the papers, the endless
 scroll of rapists and dead turtles, another
 photo of a world leader with his corn-baked face.

So you go on a car trip north to find
 some good rain. You get to Seattle,
 and the lawns are scab-brown,
 your old home on the lake—a lime-green high rise.
 Always looking for something.
 Answer keys. Antidepressants.
 More friends, another dog, another slim poetry book
 where the poet keeps pushing and pushing,
 line after line of exquisite description, one astonished
 metaphor after another, escalating into an ecstatic revelation.

You can't write like that.
 You don't read enough Virgil and Milton, don't start
 your day writing lines of iambic pentameter.
Detroit, Detroit, Detroit, Detroit, Detroit.
 And you can't meditate like some of the big names do.
 When you sit, it feels like termites streaming in and out
 of your arteries. On the screen of your inner vision,
 all your arrogance, ecstasy, and gloom.
 Your crappy conversations with the bitches in Zumba Gold
 telling you to irrigate your nostrils, get therapy,
 put a prong collar on your mutt.

But admit it—sometimes in fall, you look up and see
 an arrowhead of duck flight, lonesome and luxurious.
 If only you could understand
 how fungus flowers from the mind of the land,
 how fractal arms of trees shard the sky.
 If only you could exalt
 in ash falling, the West on fire,
 it would be like you'd just arrived on earth.

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