

# 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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