Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Donna Hilbert: Three Poems

Donna Hilbert · Thursday, January 20th, 2022

Walking the Palo Alto Marshes in my Red Coat

Say mud flat, salt marsh, bittern, egret.
Say egret without thinking regret
one letter away.

Say morning is a gift.
Say the mud flat is a silver tray.
Say birds sing like an orchestra tuning.

I am looking for a prayer.
I am walking for the saving incantation.
I am working at metaphor.

Say blackbird.
Say red wings like epaulets of blood.
Say heart: red four-chambered room.

Say womb, breast, cradle, boat.
Say desire.
Say desire: dark and fathomless,

the iris of an eye, your eye, the sea.
Say desire,
which is the boat.

I am wearing my red coat against the cold.

*

Rosemary

You are the rosemary I add to the soup:
how you pressed pungent bristles
between thumb and finger,
how you lay sprigs atop red potatoes
glistening in olive oil, salt,

house alive with the fragrance
of vegetables roasting
on any given day of the week.

1,095 days past your death, young one,
I sometimes escape the earthquake
of absence upon awakening,
but daily remembrance, I never escape:
today, it was rosemary, yesterday,
blue sea glass washed up at my feet.

*

Sympathy Pears

Sympathy pears are paired
with apples and a promise
of shipping within two days.
Regular pears and apples
take longer to box and send.

Sympathy pears and apples
are suitable for painting,
but the artist must supply
the skull, the worm, or fly.

Sympathy pears and apples
arrive with no protocol of care:
simply eat or ignore, no chore
to water, prune, or keep abloom.

Dear Bereaved One,
eat, or not, while you ponder
a *Better Place, His Will,*
Her Plan. Everlasting Love.
Or none of the above.

Photo credit: Alexis Rhone Fancher

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