

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Donna Hilbert: Three Poems

Donna Hilbert · Wednesday, June 27th, 2018

He Who Takes my Sorrow Away

He who takes my sorrow away
my friend has named her lover.
Who wouldn't wish for this,
if only for an hour or two,
that sorrow might
be lifted with the skirt,
discarded like a soiled shirt.

*

Mrs. Pulver, Landlady

Let your knees be neighbors.
Mrs. Pulver's mother never
taught her that, so, when she came
to get the rent, I couldn't help
but see her panties
and the tops of her pull-up hose.
She liked to have a cup of tea
and tell me what I'd need
to know, now that I was grown,
about to have a baby of my own.
She'd repeat the story
of her terrible wreck,
gas-pedal stuck,
the zoom down the hill,
legs broken, pelvis crushed.
"If it happens to you, girl,
what will you do?"
Mrs. Pulver, whose pelvis
is pulverized
became a song in my brain:
duck and cover
kill the engine

*don't lose the baby
down the drain.*

*

3rd Avenue North, Seattle

Look, Dear Heart, it's me
in winter cap and coat,
dressed, for once, for weather,
posed in front of the old apartment
where we were always cold
and often hungry. Meager haunt
of sauce-less spaghetti,
of peanut-butter and day-old bread.
You were a student here, studying
into the night while I read novels
and felt abandoned and unloved.
Sundays, I bawled on the phone
to Mother and you called your dad
to talk sports, laugh about my cooking.
Here is where I lay on the sofa
aflame with fever, where a punk
intruder punched your front teeth loose.
Here is where we fought everyday,
made love every night.
Here is where we brought
our first two babies home.
Here is where we mapped
our sparkling future.
Here is where we couldn't wait to flee.
Now, the babies are grown
and you, Dear Heart, are gone.
But, you would recognize this place,
it's just as we left it—
the faded paint, the splintered door
opening to the asphalt lot.

(Author photo by Alexis Rhone Fancher)

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