

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Dorianne Laux & Joseph Millar: Two Poems

Dorianne Laux & Joseph Millar · Wednesday, March 16th, 2016

AWP (The Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference & Book Fair) runs from March 30th through April 2nd, 2016. For the first time it will be held in Los Angeles! Thousands of writers and publishers will invade DTLA. It promises to be four days to remember. There will be readings and performances held in venues throughout the city. *Cultural Weekly's* intrepid Poetry Editor, ALEXIS RHONE FANCHER, will be reading in Venice, alongside poetry luminaries: DORIANNE LAUX, JOSEPH MILLAR, RICHARD GARCIA, CYNTHIA ATKINS, FRANCESCA BELL, MICHELLE BITTING, DAVID TOMAS MARTINEZ, and special guest poet, J. SCOTT BROWNLEE. Over the next 3 weeks, *Cultural Weekly* will be featuring their poems.

Mark Your Calendar, and join them at **Beyond Baroque in Venice on Thursday, March 31st at 8pm** for this Once-In-A-Lifetime Event! **This reading is OPEN TO THE PUBLIC! and Sponsored By CULTURAL WEEKLY.**

SEE YOU THERE!

The Day After Sinatra Married Mia Farrow

So the coffee would stay hot all morning
Edna, the large-boned Dutch waitress,
her face and throat flushed from the heat
would first fill my thermos with boiling water
in the Circle Diner on Kutztown Road,
this July morning steamy and loud
with a highway crew at the counter,
two grizzled mailmen in the side booth
and us from the nearby construction site,
a job I loved for its noise and fresh air,
screwing big lag bolts into the sills
of Caloric Stove's new factory warehouse,
the whirr of the countersink drilling the wood,
clean white hemlock or spruce
and when one of the mailmen heads for the door
Edna calls out, *Hey Jack*
how you think Frank's feeling this morning?
Smoke from the grill and the cook's cigar

clouding the wide glass window:
 Frank, 30 years her senior,
 stepping from Sam Giancana's limo
 or else whispering One For My Baby
 into the spotlight: his death
 in his voice with its flawless control,
 his slanted fedora and raincoat,
 his glittering life we could only imagine
 though most of us are laughing by now
 wolfing our hot cakes and eggs
 when the old man yells back, *Tired as hell!*
 pulling his hat down low at the door,
 happy enough to be going to work
 on a Friday under the dawnwashed sky
 of Johnson's Great Society,
 with the Lehigh Valley opening its thighs
 and the week-end gorged with promise.

Joseph Millar
 (previously published in *New Letters*)

Lake Havasu

Man-made, bejesus hot, patches of sand turned to glass.
 Home of Iron Mountain and McCulloch chainsaws.
 London Bridge, disassembled, shipped, reassembled.
 The white sturgeon stocked, found dead, some lost,
 hiding in the depths of Parker Dam. Fifty year-old
 monsters, maybe twenty feet long. Lake named
 for the Mojave word for blue. *Havasú. Havasu.*
 What we called the sky on largemouth bass days,
 striped bass nights, carp, catfish, crappie, razorback,
 turtles, stocked, caught, restocked. I stood waist deep
 in that dammed blue, and I was beautiful, a life saver
 resting on my young hips, childless, oblivious
 to politics, to the life carted in and dumped
 into the cauldron I swam through, going under,
 gliding along the cool sand like a human fish,
 white bikini-ed shark flashing my blind side.
 We heard a woman died, face down in the sand,
 drunk on a 125 degree day. That night we slept
 on dampened sheets, a hotel ice bucket on the
 bedside table. We sucked the cubes round, slid
 the beveled edges down our thighs and spines,
 let them melt to pools in the small caves
 below our sternums. While you slept beside me
 I thought of that woman, her body one long

third degree burn, sweating and turning
under a largo moon, the TV on: seven dead
from Tylenol, the etched black wedge of the
Vietnam Memorial, the Commodore Computer
unveiled, the first artificial heart, just beginning
to wonder if something might be wrong.

Dorianne Laux
(poem previously appeared in Poem-A-Day, 4/17/13)



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