
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Florence Weinberger: Three Poems

Florence Weinberger · Wednesday, June 10th, 2020

If I Understand the Theory of Punctuated Equilibrium....

There could have been a peaceful time. If there was plenty of corn,
no spears, clay for face painting, everyone a child without an alphabet.

According to the theory of punctuated equilibrium, stable periods became raucous
when something precipitous happened to change the trajectory forever.

The wheat, the wheel, the ice freeze. A mutant gene, a quake or battle,
things finally settle, sometimes for decades,

before the next upheaval, which could be what looks like a minor shift
but when accreted to the present day, becomes huge. Now it seems every day

there's something new, what robots do, what we do when we aggravate
a forest. Steal from the earth what doesn't belong to us.

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Reflections Off a Dome in Florence

Maybe it's the longing that contains the power,
not its fulfillment, the Sphinx by now too effaced,
the pyramids too ubiquitous for imagination.

My neighbors have moved to Barcelona, so
they'll have the Picassos. I miss elephants,
dust and elegance, the tiger slink into the long grasses.

My daughter stands at her window in Florence,
snaps and clicks send; hunger sings me the way
sun sizzles off the campaniles, the Arno's waters.

The years I wandered, skimmer with a camera,
I lived hours where lives were counted in centuries.
I said I went. Now I stay home, reflections

working off the glint, off souvenirs in my
reverie: a poke among the gravestones in Donegal,
a conversation with an old tailor

on the Isle of Capri, of all places.

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Urgency

Pushing the Artist (Yellow), a painting by Maria Lassnig

umbra of the artist
ghost white stark
naked brush

a recumbent figure's foot
firmly up against her ass

engorged clouds harassing
her bowed head

her horsey head
a crimson hell
arched trunk a question mark

against a yellow background
the color of cowards

she paints submissive to that
cheeky shove

so here I am, also in the painting
the way Maria drags me
into her predicament

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