

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Francesca Bell: Four Poems

Francesca Bell · Wednesday, March 12th, 2014

Francesca Bell has had poems published in many journals, including *Rattle*, *burntdistrict*, *North American Review*, *Passages North*, *Poetry Northwest*, and *The Sun*. New work is forthcoming in *Prairie Schooner*, *Crab Creek Review*, *Flycatcher*, *River Styx*, and *Tar River Poetry*.

All poems have been previously published.

I Long to Hold the Poetry Editor's Penis in My Hand

and tell him personally,
I'm sorry, but I'm going
to have to pass on this.
Though your piece
held my attention through
the first few screenings,
I don't feel it is a good fit
for me at this time.
Please know it received
my careful consideration.
I thank you for allowing
me to have a look,
and I wish you
the very best of luck
placing it elsewhere.

Why I Don't Drink

Because drink is a man with eyes more ocean
than sky, with wit, whose good humor surrounds
him like fragrance, whose suits sit just right
and don't wrinkle, who wants to pour himself
into me and brings me books—the right books—
and takes me to a hotel room above an exotic city,

and dresses me in silk just for the pleasure
 of sliding it down, who enters me like a flush
 of good fortune—who, it turns out, is married,
 and likes to hang me over his knees and smack me
 till the welts rise up burning,
 and I spend a long time later,
 bent funny before a mirror, straining
 to see the bruises on my backside, wondering,
 too late, if this was a price I wanted to pay.

Regrets

My husband isn't sure he wants a woman
 willing to undress in public
 every emotion that occurs to her.
 He doesn't think I ought grind out
 page after page of sorrow,
 my voice like fingers
 working a row of buttons.
 What man, he wonders, would want
 what is his laid bare for strangers,
 the fabric of his life, also,
 tossed off like lace.
 But I need to strip
 each layer covering me,
 to feel myself take shape
 in the open. He doesn't know
 that for me, silence is a too-tight dress
 I can't wait to escape.

The Yearning to Be Supple

Hips are the rain gutters of breath,
 my yoga teacher says.
 Where in the body, I wonder,
 are grief's rain gutters?
 Which part can I bend
 into a sluice, sweating and straining,
 to let sorrow slide through?

Make yourself soft,
 the teacher says when I struggle.

She's young and can't imagine
 I want to be soft the way
 a drunk person is soft

when drink has made him oblivious
to what the world can do,
so the world can do nothing.
He can hurl himself head-on
into each inevitable tree and still manage
his jaunty stagger from the scene.

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