

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Gary Lemons: Three Poems

Gary Lemons · Wednesday, September 9th, 2020

### Anarchy

My neighbor's mother was an anarchist  
I was told who loved to throw  
Apples through a tire hung from a rope  
In order to refine her aim when  
The time came to place the Molotov  
Cocktail exactly through the open  
Window of the limousine.

This kind of sweet preparation  
For a horrible end is why  
Chess players practice pinching  
Small grains of wet rice together  
Before actually sacrificing a pawn.

Meanwhile the government  
Is yelling for help as it slides  
Further down the toilet bowl  
And guess what—there's a line  
Of folks waiting to help flush.

In the end you get what you  
Get—you receive what you tossed  
Out—you fall down in the hole  
You took great pleasure digging—

Years might go by before  
We catch a ride on the tractor coming  
Back from the promised land  
Covered with mud from pulling  
The horizon out of the mouth  
Of those who market emptiness.

My grandmother exchanged  
Recipes with the anarchist  
But never had her to dinner.

Grandmother wasn't always  
A Christian though—she shaved her legs  
Down by the creek and hid them in men's  
Trousers so her parents didn't know—  
She loved the feel of her smooth calves—  
She kissed boys in the barn while  
Grownups sang gospels songs  
After a few convulsions around a fire.

She once said—kissing me  
Goodnight—say your prayers—do  
What you're told and whenever  
The urge comes to throw bombs  
At limousines sit down at a desk—  
Take out a blank sheet of paper and set  
The damn thing on fire with words.

\*

## **I'd Give Anything**

Everyone spoke like an old  
Pocket turned inside out  
Dumping small change  
On the floor—they tore collars from  
Shirts to wipe themselves before  
Sniffing the crack in the Liberty Bell.

Kids sang songs and recited  
Pledges in different uniforms  
As if consignment to any belief  
Made them immune to the blind  
Sniper high on a hill with an  
Unending supply of ammunition.

The nation poured out its pain  
From the reservoir of its wounds  
To water the fossilized flowers  
In a biblical garden of shame.

I'd give anything  
To have America back.

Well not anything because

That's why it's gone.

\*

## Death In the Neighborhood

At first we thought Terry was  
Just another poor skinny girl not  
Getting enough food at home—  
Like we understood that—

Then she fell while walking down  
The hall at school right in front  
Of me—just dropped her books  
And keeled over in a pile  
Of thin bones and big eyes  
Looking lost and scared.

She lived 5 houses down  
And her parents and mine  
Played cards on Saturday  
Night and sometimes she'd  
Come over and we'd look  
At Encyclopedias for hours.

Leukemia. Acute and lymphocytic.  
We looked it up once doctors  
Told her parents and she overheard  
Them one night when she  
Was supposed to be in bed but

Got woken by her Dad  
Hollering bad words at God.

I guess I learned to love Terry—  
Not just like her—in those last  
Weeks before saying goodbye.

She was my first death.  
She was my first love.

It still gets to me—her eyes—  
Her dark hair and freckles—  
Her brave listing from side to side  
On her way back out to sea.

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