

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.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, September 9th, 2020 at 9:41 am and is filed under [Poetry](#)

You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.