

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Jan Harwood: Three Poems

Jan Harwood · Thursday, March 3rd, 2022

A Last Time

I'm a seriously old woman
but I still get the urge sometimes, you know?
And last night, the time seemed ripe;
lying in my bed, a completely sexless mystery beside me,
cat sound asleep and no one else about—I decided to give it a shot.

My fingers felt a bit rough on my dry and delicate clit—
but I thought that might help,
as determination, pressure and friction have always worked fine in the past.

(I believe it was less than a year ago when I achieved multiples of joyful
pleasure time after time,
savoring the multiple smiles on my age-weathered face.)

But last night there was no joy
Not even a damp premonition of delight—
Only some, like, hopeful discomfort —
and eventually, the cat woke up—miffed by the persistent shaking of his
peaceful bed, he jumped down with a soft growl
like a disapproving maiden aunt.

I guess it's okay, since I never thought I'd be here this long;
and pleasures still come crowding in
through my eyes and ears and palate;
memory constantly lavishes me with a symphony of love, losses,
triumphs and failures—good stories all!

It's strange to be so abundantly alive in this time of chaos and suffering,
when it's more clear every day that the center cannot hold.
And last night I realized that, as there has got to be a first time for everything,
there must also be a last.

*

THEY

When she became they,
 love soothed any shock
 even tried the vocabulary
 resulting in strange neologisms
 as well as chagrin at dignified corrections
 “Not *she*, Grandma.”

When there was talk of injections, surgery,
 when the silvery voice deepened and dark hairs began to sprout
 love admired the new tattoos on creamy skin,
 held out its arms and held they tight.

*

NOTE FROM AN EX-ACTIVIST

So much is wrong!
 how can I relish the veined cordovan leaf,
 sunlight glowing through it?
 What’s the good of Mozart, or even Bach—
 much less Roberta Flack
 killing me softly with her song—
 the odd patch of rainbow on a tile floor
 as light comes through a prism in my mother’s stained glass
 bluebird
 the shocking perfection of any feather
 from any living bird
 a crisp orange tulip
 the comfort of chicken soup, thick with gravy
 my delicious warm bed at six AM,
 when I can turn my aching hips and go to sleep again
 the bottomless trust in my old dog’s eyes
 a friend’s hug, and her joke
 my brother’s rare laugh on the phone from Florida, echoing that
 of our sweet long-dead father
 my children’s unexpected kindness, and their good sense.
 So much is wrong—but my time is short
 and all I want to do now is savor, and praise.

DANGEROUS WOMEN

■ A RAGING GRANNY MYSTERY ■



JAN HARWOOD

AUTHOR & EDITOR OF RAGING AND ROARING WITH THE SANTA
CRUZ WILPF RAGING GRANNIES AND STILL RAGING AND ROARING

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