

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Jefferson Carter: Three Poems

Jefferson Carter · Wednesday, July 7th, 2021

### LIFE PARTNER

For convenience, I & my life partner  
(the woman formerly known as my wife)  
have numbered our arguments. Number 3,  
you're so negative. Number 8, you're  
naive. Number 11, another beer already?  
Number 13, you don't listen to me.  
But I do. I just don't agree. Now  
my life partner's on the couch, watching  
*Live P.D.* She's pleased with the police,  
so kind to the miscreants & trailer trash  
they apprehend. Of course, they're  
kind! They're on camera! Without  
looking at me, she holds up three fingers.

My life partner wants to make a deal:  
she'll stop storing our broken pepper mill  
upright in the spice rack, pepper everywhere  
like coarse soot, she'll store the mill  
on its side if I stop switching off the light  
over the dining-room table whenever  
she's in another room. Why? Why  
does she need that light on all day?  
She raises both fists & opens each one  
twice. Number 20, you don't love me.

\*

### CAT & TRANSIENT

The homeless guy who lowers himself  
down beside me on the bench  
outside the Co-op? He's generic,  
more dirt than human. As if  
my father's ill spirit possesses me,

I almost snarl “Hey! I’m eating here,”  
 his stink killing my appetite for the bowl  
 of organic jackfruit on my lap. I stand,  
 ashamed, give him a dollar & walk away  
 after dumping the paper bowl  
 into a trashcan advertising the pleasures  
 of our historic shopping district.  
 I swore I’d stop writing about liberal guilt  
 & about cats too, but I must confess  
 last night, I groomed our little black cat  
 with my tongue & watched her perpetually  
 startled gold eyes widen as I licked her neck  
 & then her belly, inhaling her scent.  
 In Japan, childless couples can rent  
 a cat by the hour to sniff its belly, which  
 smells like the crown of a baby’s head.

\*

## OR MY SISTER, THE FEMINIST

You told me  
 I can’t imagine  
 what it’s like  
 being a woman.  
 But I can imagine  
 being a spoon, a loaf  
 of bread, a hummingbird,  
 even a werewolf,  
 in-grown hairs & all.  
 Why not a woman?  
 Don’t you remember  
 the night you woke up  
 sobbing & I left  
 my bed down the hall  
 to hold your hand  
 until you fell back to sleep?

*Photo credit: Bill Moeller*

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