

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Jennifer Bradpiece: Three Poems

Jennifer Bradpiece · Wednesday, September 16th, 2020

Lullaby for Children

I envy them too much
to have one.

Their infinite mouths,
mad things
uttering syllables detached
from discernible meaning.

The unprovoked screams
in crowded restaurants.

The inconsolable moan
at improbable altitudes in planes.

The things they do with food
when tiny green peas inspire
performance art instead of appetite.

I am still confused by the electric
fuse of life
pulsing through my own veins.
Too confounded to expand the cord
of my flesh into the blood and breath of another.

I rearrange the clutter inside
my own crowded room,
alphabetize my insomnia, press
my compulsions neatly on the floral slab,
needlepoint my neurosis into cushions.

In this asylum, only room for one.

*

Lullaby for Ovaries

The women are falling under sterile silver waves,
knives cutting out dangerous pearls.

Pearls carved by time cresting:
two decades, the wave falls
three decades under, four decades, five.

Women who cast words out on water,
paint on its oiled surface,
weave music from the air above sea,
adorn skins in shimmering scales of their own fashioning.
Women who create bodies of work rather than bodies within.

The doctors, those unimaginative navigators
of our vessels, ask “why?” and “when?”
Seeking to plant mermaids into gardens
like little Eves to seed
and split shoots that might save them,
yet anchor them into someone else’s sands.

Now, I have harvested something foreign.
Been summoned to stand on
their diagnostic dock. They want me
un-perfumed, stripped bare, my upper half turned,
breasts pressed between cold plastic,
two bookends
that might tell the end of the story between them.

*

Lullaby for a Species

The humans had a strange run.
They always thought
they were talking to each other.

They licked their fingers to paper
and folded up their hearts,
but stuffed them into sock drawers.

Paper cut deeper
than daggers
until the keyboard—

the tap-tap of resonant notes,

of dissonant notes.
They used them to strike,

but could not hear the music.
They signed their souls to Truth,
but seldom knew honesty.

Desperate to be heard,
they forgot
how to listen.

Now every window
lights an author,
audience dissolving.

Obsessed with finding
themselves,
each hallway grew mirrors.

(Featured photo by Alexis Rhone Fancher)

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