

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Judy Kronenfeld: Two Poems

Judy Kronenfeld · Friday, February 4th, 2022

Scare-Crone

I know I'm going to look down
at my thumb tomorrow morning
and see a wen sprung up
like a mushroom overnight, the first step
of a goose-stepping cancer—
or at least that's how I'm thinking,
driving home from visiting my coeval friend
whose body's a clumpy puddle, a slumping
pudding, who, as we leave
for the restaurant, squashes
an ancient discolored cap over her white-stubbed head—
(she cannot care, that scares me so) around which
the black crows circle, cawing,
and who's so goddamned un-self-pitying.

I pity, I admire, growing fiercer
for music music music—not
to be stuck in the musty corner
at the living dance, drooping
wall-weed in ill-fitting frumpy skin.
I want to throw shots back
into my open mouth—let my delicate
stomach rebel—and throw up
all the virtues—acceptance,
patience, dignity in decline.

I'm not going to stock pretty leak-control panties
or plan ahead for babbling on the heath,
though I can see my own crows
coming to roost—the crow of bone
crumble, the crow of dental
devastation, the crow of deranged feet.
But the black ox has not yet trod
definitively on my toe, and so—my luxury—

I hate the crows that get
 in my face and try
 to fend them off:
 this one, feathers mangy with parasites,
 who waddles near my right eye
 wearing a groove; this one, twig-tool
 held in his beak, who works his signature
 trefoil by my left.

I shimmer my eyelids, wave
 my hands, though their cousins
 flock to my lips, as if digging the furrows
 above and below will yield seeds,
 though they land on my fingers,
 my arms; though I'm on the train
 to nightmare, though I'm on the train
 to scare, I don my flowy clothes
 and, shining like shook foil,
 dance in my glitter and glow.

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Definitional

Irresistible belly dance music on,
 we girls, all alone—during my quick visit
 from the opposite coast—shoulders wiggling,
 hips twitching, spring
 into crazy moves in my daughter's tiny
 living room in our jeans and tees—
 she, with the munged cartilage
 excised from her right knee, leading;
 I, with my tender knees,
 one replaced, one not;
 and my six-year-old granddaughter
 of the shy sidelong smile,
 the only one of us whole—all
 go for it: undulate
 and kick, furl
 and unfurl hands, whirl
 and dip and drop, laughing,
 into chairs, trying to catch
 our breaths. I have fed
 on the good reliable bread
 of contentment, but this
 was dripping fistfuls of sequin confetti
 flung into the air and hanging for a moment
 crackling like fireworks—this sudden,

utterly impractical, small sweet
of joy.

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