

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Kathryn deLancellotti: Three Poems

Kathryn de Lancellotti · Wednesday, October 24th, 2018

Farewell to Jezebel: Eaten by Dogs

after a 19th-century painting by John Liston Byam Shaw, "Jezebel, Queen of Israel"

Whoever wrote the bible wanted you remembered
as the Whore of Israel.
They must have hated you, or something you knew,
or possessed, to give you that title.
You aren't a fighter like Deborah or devoted
like Miriam or nameless like Potiphar's wife.
You didn't steal strength with a haircut,
or bathe naked on a rooftop, or laugh at God.
Each time you spread your legs
you knew exactly what you were doing.
You've known since the first finger,
the first fist, all the fissures
and tarring and tears. The king's dead,
they killed your son, too.
You're not going to hide, are you?
You're going to stare out that window
and take it. You don't even care
what they do with your name,
or with the body, you've already left.
You wanted to be remembered with a pink rose
in your red hair, eyes lined with coal.

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These Walls

One day these walls will become
too full and fall to the floor
like the tick that drank its belly red
and dropped from the dog's ear.

There are invisible webs in every corner
 I would have never seen
 if not for the black hairs caught
 like flies to poison.
 I placed my ear to the wall, bees hummed
 beneath layers of wallpaper, decades
 smoothed over with floral and textures.
 When the exterminator smoked the hive,
 it fled through the chimney—
 an angry cloud over Wagon Wheel Blvd.
 The milk, the honey, chamomile, Xanax, weed.
 I tried everything. My doctor said,
if you can't sleep, clean.
 I did not take his advice.
 Instead, I lie in bed awake and listen
 to my son's breathing.
 To owl song and cat fight.
 I drift with the night blooming jasmine
 into half-dream—
 frantically eating my way out
 of silk and night, with no choice
 but wings
 and piercing light.

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Not To the Father Will I Give Myself

for Robert Bly

Not to confessionals, nor banks, nor country.
 I will not drop bombs, Sir, will not build walls.
 No longer will I give myself to bearded musicians,

 nor salty surfers. Cold showers, instead.
 I will not treat Earth the way you treat the feminine.
 Will not pour oil into oceans, starve the sacred

 polar bear, nor steal ivory from an elephant's face.
 It's true, Officer, I told my toddler not to trust you,
 that you're like a dog off leash. Leaders of War,

 of Money, of pussy grabbing, you may not kiss me,
 Nor choose for me. And Mr. Vice, step out,
 it's beautiful to be gay.

 I don't pray to Archangel Michael, anymore.
 I pray to the Mother, to Mary, and to the other Mary.
 Dare I say her name? Washed his feet with her hair—

Saint Magdalene, teach us to love our clits, again.
Teach us multiple orgasm. No more faking, ladies.
Teach us to say, no, I don't want to have sex with you,

don't want to make your bed. Go ahead, call me a whore.
You've been hurt, too, little brother,
told to take off your sunflower dress.

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