Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Krista Lukas: Four Poems

Krista Lukas · Wednesday, July 9th, 2014

Krista Lukas is the author of a poetry collection, *Fans of My Unconscious* (Black Rock Press, 2013). Poems from the collection have been featured on the *Writer's Almanac*, in the *Best American Poetry 2006*, and *Creative Writer's Handbook*. A former schoolteacher in Douglas County, Nevada, Lukas is now a Chancellor's Distinguished Fellow and a Gluck Fellow at the University of California, Riverside, where she is pursuing her MFA in Creative Writing.

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Letter V

The v slices
divorce
di- spins down
to the left, alone
comes to sound
like die,
what you are
sure you want.
And -orce, cut off,
a spewed-out
syllable, a spiny
thing that rakes
your gut. What's left
is -v-, a blade
to carve all new
v's of your
body: armpit, elbow,
the cunt, the corners
of your mouth. The wells
between your toes, your fingers,
where the webbing
has evolved out, where now,
in place of your diamond—
a pale soft band of skin.

***

Would It Be So Wrong

to suggest that he move
next door? I don’t want him
gone altogether, neither can I stand
him underfoot. It might be ideal
to holler over the fence,
invite him to dinner.
We’d sit together on the patio, eat
asparagus from his garden,
grilled shrimp under the setting sun,
then kiss the grease from our lips,
maybe more. After,
he’d go home
and watch basketball at full volume,
while I soak in the tub listening to Coltrane.
Then, wearing pajamas, hair uncombed,
I’d curl up in my own living
room with Robert Frost or People
and the cat, the quiet,
the light of a single lamp.

***

Vade Mecum

You can run your hand along my binding, trace
the raised letters of my title, take off my dust jacket,

feel the texture, the roughness of my fore-edge.
Lay me down on my spine, lay me down

on your table, or cradle me
between your knees, take me

to your bed. Breathe in the scent
of my paper, feel how smooth my pages,

open me and dip in—notice my dedication,
advance praise—skim the body

do what you can to resist
skipping to the end. Read me all the way

through. Read me from the beginning, let go
your disbelief, let anticipation build. Trust me

to surprise you. Get entangled,

lose yourself in the rising action,

keep going, keep going through my climax,
through the fall, the denouement.

And after, hold me. Stay with me, hold me,
and drift to sleep dreaming my words, cover to cover.

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Composing a Sample Poem for Third Graders, Who Are Generally Encouraged to Write Cheerful Things, I Choose My Estranged Brother and the Color Gray

—after Barbara M. Joose, author of I Love You the Purplest

Ben, I love you the grayest.
I love you the color of forgotten things, cobwebs and dust in corners.
I love you the color of storm clouds and thunder,
stripes on the june bug's wing.
I love you the color of driftwood, of ancient boulders
ground to bits by time and water.
Smoke, sky scrapers, and over-washed whites.
The color of a moth, pale cousin to the butterfly.
I love you the color of in-between, the color of a question
with no right answer.
I love you, Ben, the grayest.

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