

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Larry Colker: Four Poems

Larry Colker · Wednesday, February 4th, 2015

Larry Colker has been co-hosting the weekly Redondo Poets reading at Coffee Cartel in Redondo Beach for 15 years. He is the author of four chapbooks: *At the Curb*, *Car Waiting*, *Boy Standing* (1997); *What the Lizard Knows* (2003); *Hunger Crossing* (with Danielle Grilli, 2006); *Girl with Tattooed Heart*, *Boy Standing* (2008). In 2007 his submission won first place for poetry in the California Writers Exchange contest, sponsored by Poets & Writers, Inc. His first book-length collection, *Amnesia and Wings*, was published by Tebot Bach in 2013 (available at www.tebotbach.org and www.amazon.com). His poems have been published in *Rattle*, *The Los Angeles Review*, *The Cortland Review*, *Burnside Review*, *The Mas Tequila Review*, *Malpaís Review*, *Askew*, *Spillway*, *Poeticdiversity.com*, and other print and online journals.

Gazette

Lonnie is in Florida visiting her father,
possibly for the last time.
The Patent Office ruled that “Redskins” is a degrading term
and therefore cannot be a trademark, legally.
Sarah’s cat can open a drawer.
If Earth’s population is represented by 100 people,
fewer than 28 are “White.”
Guns don’t kill people; ammunition kills people.
Mercury is retrograde—be very, very careful.
All of my female friends are on a spiritual journey.
At 10:01 this morning, something happened.
Also at 10:30, and 10:47.
Donald likes a folksong sung by Leon Bibb.
Marie likes a steampunk fashion catalog.
Tom, Sarah, Erin, Tony, Scott, David, Hermione,
Alice, Nicole, Richard—and Richard’s brother, Tim—Nadia,
Sonia, Tanya, Antonio, Maurice and Jack like the necklace
Cathy’s husband gave her for their fifth anniversary.
I like a video of different species sleeping together.
Tonight something about the moon will not happen again

until long after we are all dead.

The Leap

We stood in groups of twos and threes
on the sidewalk outside the bar,
talking, smoking, watching traffic and each other,
one quiet old guy by himself looking at the moon,

when a quick motion caught our eyes
as the girl pounced onto her boyfriend,
shimmied up his tall torso,
squeezed her legs around his waist,
clasped her arms around his neck,
pressed her face into his hair.

If I were a prophet I'd say
a burst of light surrounded them
like a glory. Like revelation, like satori,
we were all converted on the spot:
for the rest of our lives we'd wait
for such a rapture, such a wrapped her,
our bodies suddenly made heavy
with bone and flesh not our own.

I caught the old man staring, dumbstruck,
until he collected himself,
went back to looking at stars.

At first the boyfriend took it like a puppy's exuberance,
continued the conversation, as though that leap,
still rebounding in our chests,
was nothing special. But his girl did not unlatch,
tightened her arms and legs around him
until who knows what was let loose inside,
and he hugged her back, with a shy smile at us
as if embarrassed by his riches.

(Originally published in *The Sun*)

Projector

Half sewing machine, half tank,
it was the closest thing I knew to a holy relic.

Elders fetched it from the closet

like the ark of our covenant with the past.

First came the ghosts of those who lie in the ground,
jerky simulacra dancing to staccato chatter.

Then came the famous line-up of the nine cousins,
four in diapers, three crying, all with chicken pox.

Then here we are, recognizable at last, in Florida,
Making faces at the camera; in the background, dolphins leaping.

O maker of humanity in its image,
O moving art,

you made light of us all.
We glowed.

(Originally published on *The Cortland Review*)

Transgression

My colleague on the high-school faculty
arrives at our apartment with his date—
the prettiest, smartest junior in our school.
My wife and I cannot prevent our eyes
from widening when we see them at the door.
Greetings and introductions make the rounds
but now the air is full of musk and promise,
making our foursome feel like two too many.
I don't know how it happens, but my wife
and I decide to "run an errand," tell
John and Lisa we will be right back,
and leave them there. We get into our car
and drive off to the liquor store for wine.
Our thoughts are elsewhere, though. Oh, John, I think,
you lucky bastard, while my wife, I'm sure,
is thinking how hard Lisa's heart is beating.
And there we are, fleeing what both of us
desire. When we get back, their eyes are gleaming.
We make some conversation for a while
standing in the middle of the room.
then John says he and Lisa have to leave
so she can study for a test tomorrow.
That night my wife and I do not embrace,
and dream of breaking one another's heart.

(Originally published in *The Los Angeles Review*)

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