

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Edward Field: "Mae West"

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Edward Field is the recipient of the W.H. Auden award, the Bill Whitehead lifetime achievement award, the Lambda Literary Award, and is the author of ten books of poetry, including After The Fall: poems old and new, in which can be found his poem, "Mae West," published by University of Pittsburgh Press, © 2007.

Mae West

She comes on drenched in a perfume called Self-Satisfaction
from feather boa to silver pumps.

She does not need to be loved by you,
though she'll give you credit for good taste.

Just because you say you love her
she's not throwing herself at your feet in gratitude.

Every other star reveals how worthless she feels
by crying when the hero says, Marry me,

or how unhoped- for the approval is
when the audience applauds her big number,
but Mae West takes it as her due:

she knows she's good.

She expects the best for her self
and knows she's worth what she costs,
and she costs plenty –

she's not giving anything away.

She enjoys her admirers, fat daddy or muscleman,
and doesn't confuse vanity and sex,

though she never turns down pleasure,
lapping it up.

Above all she enjoys her self,
swinging her body that says, Me, me, me, me.

Why not have a good time?

As long as you amuse me, go on,

I like you slobbering over my hand, big boy,

I have a right to.

Most convincing, we know all this

not by her preaching
but by her presence – it's no act.
Every word and look and movement
spells Independence:
she likes being herself.
And we who don't
can only look on, astonished.

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