

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Pam Ward: Three Poems

Pam Ward · Thursday, March 31st, 2022

### Single Mom

Somewhere between  
a burnt marriage  
a greasy kitchen  
and a grey 22.  
Sandwiched between  
these smiling kids  
and my painted teeth.  
Somewhere way off  
from coffee mugs  
stained with yesterday's  
paycheck, rent due  
that last final kiss.  
Choosing between  
Disneyland or  
Sybil Brand\*  
murder or Mr.  
Toad's ride.  
Driving all the way  
from Anaheim to LA  
anxious as an inmate.  
Passing your house  
your new car  
your girlfriend's red bike  
smashing the snails  
on my porch.  
Somewhere between  
what I didn't say  
and my black  
Ajax mouth  
scrounging for words  
but spitting a shoe.  
With two of you  
in my back seat

sweet dreamy lugs  
 tasting of grape juice  
 and cherry.  
 Somewhere between  
 their breath at my neck  
 or them asking for water  
 or the fear  
 they'll call some  
 bimbo mommie  
 gnaws at me yanks  
 me straight back  
 from the brink  
 makes me face  
 one more sink  
 full of dishes.

\*a notorious Los Angeles women's prison

\*

### What Miles Thought He Heard Cicely Say

"Gimme a black eye  
 a boot kick  
 a side of smacked face  
 a chocolate shake that  
 can dislocate spine.  
*Come on, Miles!*  
 Slap me silly.  
 Knock me into next week.  
 Drown me in the sea of  
 your *Bitches Brew* again  
 till my skin's *Kinda Blue*  
 and my elbow hangs funny  
 and does a dry bump & grind in my sling.  
*Come on, Miles!*  
 Kick the living daylights outta me!  
 Wipe the smile off my face.  
 Wipe the floor up with me.  
 Make me see stars.  
 Make me hear Lady Day scream.  
 Make Coltrane blare from the grave.  
 Maybe I'll get lucky  
 and meet my maker this time.  
 Before your trumpet turns weapon.  
 Before your horn drums my lungs.  
 Before my teeth beg my ribs not to breathe.  
*Come on Miles!*  
 It's *Round Midnight*, we got plenty of time!

Why don't cha beat me within an inch of my life!"

\*

## Hollywood Hills

Every time I went over Kim's her dad came  
outside while we laid next to the pool.  
It was a small, useless tank  
with horrible swamp-green water  
where bugs hatched their eggs in the scum.  
Her dad would *always* come out there  
checking the pump  
fiddling with the gauges  
sticking his wrist in the deep end.  
Kim leaned over and told me  
they were all in therapy now  
ever since he fucked one of her friends.  
I watched him duck in the garage  
and emerge later, shot glass red  
a Jim Beam smirk on his lips.  
He wades in and wet covers his thighs, hips and gut  
ballooning vulgarly over his shorts.  
His grin made me think of a zipper half-down.  
A man whistling at kids while hosing his grass.  
My hairdresser begging me to "suck it," right there in his chair.  
And I know that it's out there  
happening in Hollywood or Watts or Marina del Rey.  
Everyday there's a hand with a fistful of candy.  
A wet hungry tongue resting over chapped lips.  
A fist waiting to scrawl your name on the stall.  
An arm luring you down underwater.

\*\*\*



*between good men & no man at all* by Pam Ward

**Purchase *BETWEEN GOOD MEN & NO MAN AT ALL* by Pam Ward**

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*Photo Credit: Rachel Resnick*

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