
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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