

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Peter Neil Carroll: Three Poems

Peter Neil Carroll · Thursday, December 17th, 2015

Peter Neil Carroll is the author of three collections of poetry, most recently *Fracking Dakota: Poems for a Wounded Land* (Turning Point, 2015) and *A Child Turns Back to Wave: Poetry of Lost Places* (Press Americana, 2012) which won the Prize Americana from the Institute for American Popular Culture. Other books include a memoir titled *Keeping Time*. He has taught creative writing at the University of San Francisco, taught history and American Studies at Stanford and Berkeley, and hosted “Booktalk” on Pacifica Radio. He lives in Belmont, California.

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### Eye Witness

She was striding too fast, skidded  
on a bulge in the pavement, flew  
like a plane, and made a hard landing  
on her face. I think she broke her nose.  
Blood splattered her glasses. An old man  
stopped to help her up. He brushed  
off her navy blue coat. A shopkeeper  
appeared with a box of tissues, dabbed  
her face. The woman kept saying  
thank you, thank you, thank you.  
She had a refined voice, polished  
manner. She wore mint-green panties.  
I was behind her when it happened.

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### Looking

The ocean is sneaky, low waves, rapid  
surges, a drawn backward suck. Crab-like  
a breaker leaps, catches a woman stepping  
in foam, snatches the top of her swimsuit.  
She screams, hands jump to her breasts.  
Children nearby gawk at her panic, show  
fear. An older boy moves closer. Her friend

rushes with a towel, his voice soothing.  
The kids turn, scatter, but the youth  
stays, entranced. Man and woman retreat  
to a blanket. She dresses, gathers her bag  
and basket. The boy struck rigid, his face  
a mask. He's done nothing but  
look, seen. Her image riveted, indelible,  
for him, for me, eternal.

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## Bait

Canvas backs cackle after sex  
and smoothly swim apart. Trees  
still bare, the woods don't filter  
light. Green is greener, flesh  
fleshier. Speechless deer stare  
at the humping geese. We're all bait  
for a passing creature. I hesitate  
to approach strangers, afraid  
to startle someone I may want to eat.

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