Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Two Poets: Clint Margrave & Ann Menebroker

Clint Margrave · Thursday, September 13th, 2012

Clint Margrave lives in Long Beach, CA. His first full-length collection of poems, The Early Death of Men, is newly released from NYQ Books. His work has also appeared or is forthcoming in The New York Quarterly, Rattle, Ambit (UK), 3AM (UK), Pearl, Serving House Journal, Word Riot, and Nerve Cowboy, among others.
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Looking in People's Houses

My wife thinks it's creepy of me, & I admit,
she's probably right. Still, it doesn't stop me
when we take our nightly walks around the neighborhood.
It's not that I'm out to compare anything
or hope to catch a glimpse of
some good-looking woman in a towel crossing her hallway
(which would be perverted after all),
& I don't do it in the way my mom used to make my dad
drive around rich neighborhoods,
as some masochistic maneuver to make
themselves feel inadequate.
"It's just creepy," says my wife.
But I can't help myself.
I want to see how people spend their nights.
How they sit in their family rooms. What they hang on
their walls. I want to see the different body language
between different husbands & different wives –
do they sit close together,
or are they like my parents who fell asleep
on separate couches watching television
every night? I want to see what people eat for dinner.
Are they drinking wine? Screaming at each other?
Picking their nose? What are they thinking about?
Are they anxious? Sick? Tired? Hopeless?
"Look," says my wife, tugging on my arm
& trying to lure my attention
from one of the houses,

“you can see a lot of stars tonight.”
But tonight I’m less interested
in my neighbors trillions of miles away
than I am those much closer to me,
who tell me all I need to know
about the universe.

Ann Menebroker has been publishing for many years, is the author of over 20 chapbooks and books of her work, as well as broadsides. She has appeared in many poetry anthologies, a medical book, and a college textbook, Literature and Its Writers. These poems were published in the chapbook collection The Measure of Small Gratitudes from Kamini Pres, Sweden, 2011. Photo by Sue McElligott in Sausalito, Ca in August, 2012.

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Photo Composition

it’s the way his hips poke out, one foot
resting a little to the side, holding more of
his weight than the other, his large right hand
holding onto a hat, wearing an ill-fitting suit
which looks sexy on him, dressing
him for this wedding day, and she, beside
him, in a satiny dress, slim, beautiful
and probably smelling of wonderful perfurme, that
makes me feel their love and need of each
other, the direct “‘here we are” into the camera
and then, eighty-one years of age later, older than
history and opportunity, separated by
ill health and finally ,by death, he fumbles
and trips over life and falls into that mystery
orchestrated by an unknown song
where she has gone.

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Composition

illness is such a distraction, so he puts
headphones on and listens to music
which is also a way to get to go other places.
his dentist has offered it as well as his
surgeon. when he takes the one he loves
into his arms there is music, but also
through its osmosis, a giving back
of the delectable and perceived beat
and the measure of small gratitudes.

Image between the poems: *Detail from ‘Marin Shadows’ (2009) by Lori Zimmerman. Lori is a fiber artist working in the Los Angeles area.*

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