

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Margaret Randall: Power's Golden Crown

Margaret Randall · Tuesday, October 22nd, 2013

Margaret Randall is a feminist poet, writer, photographer and social activist. Born in New York City in 1936, she has lived for extended periods in Albuquerque, New York, Seville, Mexico City, Havana, and Managua. Shorter stays in Peru and North Vietnam were also formative. In the turbulent 1960s she co-founded and co-edited EL CORNO EMPLUMADO / THE PLUMED HORN, a bilingual literary journal which for eight years published some of the most dynamic and meaningful writing of an era.

OTHER STORYLINES

What screams from the window
of the car idling beside yours
cannot be described as sound,
music's history
stuffed deep in frayed pockets.
Aroused only by whip and chains
she claims she is in control.
All other storylines
whither in memory
or cower beneath the bed.
In the torture chamber
he is detached,
keeping his *right* and *wrong*
in clear perspective,
his prisoner an afterthought.
The suicide bomber straps
and buckles his bulky vest,
closes his eyes
and utters his last sad words:
I matter.

THROUGH MUD OF WAR AND MUCK OF PROMISE

A fan of interlocking scenes

etched on the underbelly
 of expectation:
 third from left
 has an ever-rising sun
 and dependable climate.
 I must reach to glimpse
 farthest to right,
 its mirage of answers
 so far beyond their questions
 the space between
 swells in perfect labyrinth.
Take all of me pleads my life,
 still urging
 holistic solution.
 We are more than the sum
 of paltry choices
 available at birth.
 Minutes dance to a beat
 surprised
 by unexpected quarter notes,
 Harmony enters
 only where something stolen
 is replaced by risk.
 We hurry to follow those tiny arrows
 stitched to the underside
 of eyelids
 or along the heart's retaining wall
 through mud of war
 and muck of promise.
 While the rhythm of lockstep
 and resignation
 holds out its cajoling hand
 a new wind invites us
 to make one last chance
 our first.

UP THROUGH THE CLOUDS

Purposeful, blindered, this
 regiment of minutes
 ticks along
 behind my wary eyes.
 They are my minutes
 and only I see them.
 When they come upon others
 they quicken their step.
 The arrow says *one way only*
 and I fear

the tiny increments will obey
as long as they are able.
Only the softest shadow of regret
might cause them to stumble
and fall,
move backward in disarray
or climb up through the clouds
and disappear
like those buffalo in the
Barry Lopez story
witnessed by a party of Cheyenne
camped on the Laramie Plain
near the Medicine Bow Mountains,
winter of 1845.
It is all about direction
and language:
the expertise of feet,
how one sound hides within another,
how nouns and verbs
spar or dance together.
People between two rivers
situate their adjectives
with care.
A female word
must run to catch up
with power's golden crown.
It takes the perfect storm of
happenstance and disbelief
brought together
by one too many lies
woven into the texture
of our lives.
It takes horror disguised
as life as usual.
Time's forward motion
stops, shifts,
leaves you peering at 1491
with a 2013 promise on your lips.

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