

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Rebecca Aronson: Three Poems

Rebecca Aronson · Sunday, November 13th, 2022

Aviary

It was my mother who noticed
when his breathing stopped.
I was thinking of the hummingbirds

we had watched the year before, their throats
flashing among the feeders, how their commotion
woke my pulse. Now my mother

exited the bubble of her dementia
to say, as she had always done, the crucial thing.
The three of us had lingered on the porch, a bouquet

of small wings shimmering around us.
In the corridor where we waited while the nurses
did their work, my mother had already retreated

to other worries. In his last minutes
my father must have heard the flurry of our talk,
light laughter, his family enduring. Maybe

he was assured that he could leave.
Maybe the leaving wasn't painful.
He slipped from breath to death

so quietly. When we arrived
at the place where the hummingbirds were,
we didn't want to see our rooms. We wanted nothing

but to stay in the presence of all that urgency
while we held as still as we could.
He was never beautiful

but his mind was bright and quick and loud.
The hummingbirds, alerted by a signal
we couldn't know, ceased their whirring and were gone.

*

My Mother Disapproves

of afternoon languor, lying on couches,
textured wallpaper. Hammocks; guest rooms
in which the fold-out bed is left unfolded.
Curtains left closed past eight or open
past dark. Matinees, drive-ins, daytime television.
Snacking, sweet cocktails, state fairs. Corn dogs, hotdogs, dogs,
any talk of god. Dive bars. Motorcycles, mini-skirts,
pleather. Cartoons, line dancing. Most music
composed past the eighteenth century. Day-drinking, playing hooky, ganja,
and boy bands. Camping. Car trips, RVs, Christmas lights.
Orange soda. Messy rooms. Spell check, tube tops. Arrows
drawn through a heart or shot
at a bullseye.
Drama, melodrama, melancholy, snakes. Cigarettes,
green cars, mistletoe, skinny-dipping. A smoky eye,
tight pants, my uncombed hair,
the fleshy, unbound hours of my every day and night.

*

Dear Gravity,

My bones are hollow. I dream of flight.
In dreams I am not afraid
to look down. You are my uncle
a thousand times removed. There's a family resemblance,
they say, as I am aging my way to ground.
Someday maybe I'll be a stump
the other birds pause to rest on.
What is finer than to be? Not was. Not was.



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