Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Richard Krawiec: Two Poems

Richard Krawiec · Sunday, March 9th, 2025

Runaways

while others were passing through metal
detectors at the airport,
emptying pockets into gray plastic bowls, slipping
off shoes and belts as if
to prevent suicide

you shuffled towards a grimy bus station counter behind
a lineup of skittish refugees; single mothers flaring
cigarettes and hip-balanced babies,
men with tattoos and scowls;
a bald ex-con in double-breasted suit jacket and
paisley tie asked you for cab fare
to travel to his next No interview; a purple- haired
girl proposed a handjob later
for $5 now; the jittery clown behind her
soon cajoled the girl away to suck a crack
pipe. You were one of those
unable to afford airports, without dreams of
trips to Disneyland.

In this lineup of bodies, bone-beaten, dismantled,
betrayed by illness and empty bank accounts, their
hearts slamming into their own reflections
in the windows of the homes they could not
inhabit, when it was your turn you stepped up to the
bars protecting the ticket seller,
looked past him at the black-ribbed menu
of so many destinations, and could not think of
one any better than where you were now, where
you could no longer stay.

*

After You Gave Me Back My Life*

I chose not to return to the world You offered
chose not to drink from the chalice bestowed
into my hands. Was it fear of risking what might be taken again, or
did I pour out the wine in oblation
to the way You breathed my soul back into
my crippled body? Should I have lived
the flesh instead of preserving it in the solitary cell of
my fevered prayers? What do you do with a gift?

**After recovering miraculously from a deadly illness, Julian of Norwich dedicated the rest of her life to solitary prayer.*

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