

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Richard Loranger: Two Poems

Richard Loranger · Tuesday, May 17th, 2022

### MILITARY HUSBAND JAW SONNET

I stir my store-bought yogurt  
tiredly over the sink,  
watching the pre-formed cup-shape  
held by the viscous sweet-sour glop  
dissolve under the churning steel of the spoon.  
It rises first in a peak well past the lip of the cup –  
I think of glaciers and glacial ridges –  
then plummets backward into cream.  
I'm not worried about the possibility  
that it could crest the lip and drop,  
leaving me with a splattered mess instead of breakfast.  
Later in life I drive my beat-up old van  
across the beach and into the ocean,  
just because I always wondered  
what that would feel like.

The ad on my Android reads:

“Military Husband Jaw Dropped  
After Seeing Her Transformation”.

I pause for a moment over that missing “s”,  
wondering whether its absence might be a result of  
rushed work, vernacular, or purposeful manipulation,  
but I am mostly taken by the photo below  
of a well-known Black American actress,  
at least well-known by those aware of Black American actresses,  
who is also noted for being a proud woman of size.

Beneath her glowing face the ad continues:

“Husband didn't even recognize his wife  
after returning from Afghanistan.....”,  
followed by a red “Read the Story” button

and the TIME® Magazine logo without the ®.

Since this woman is not actually a “military wife”  
but in fact a gorgeous Black American actress of size,

I wonder what her fictitious husband had supposedly been doing in Afghanistan, exactly what transformation had purportedly occurred, and whether that dropped jaw was meant to be a sign of good or bad things to come. I don't click on the ad.

Later that day I read that a local sports team has once again won the championship, and that cheering crowds have taken to the streets, overturning cars, smashing store windows, looting and destroying property, and setting things on fire. They are presided over by hordes of the local constabulary, who, coincidentally, just the week before, had presided over a large protest and street action involving many of the same residents in much the same location, at which time they had controlled the crowd with flash-bangs, tear gas, shields, beatings, and mass arrests. On this occasion, however, they are hanging back, and some can even be seen cheering along with the crowd. It is their team too, after all. And another car lights up, another car owned by a struggling working class man who depends on it to feed his family, a man who might be in that crowd himself.

Just because it gives you a hard on doesn't mean you should do it.

\*

## **WE SING AND RISE**

*text from an installation in a reading space*

rise tide sister into shimmer field  
embrace sacrum language or risk rift  
breathe now and stride

rise fire brother with filament matrix  
bring blossoms but shout fracas vibe  
study can revive sanity

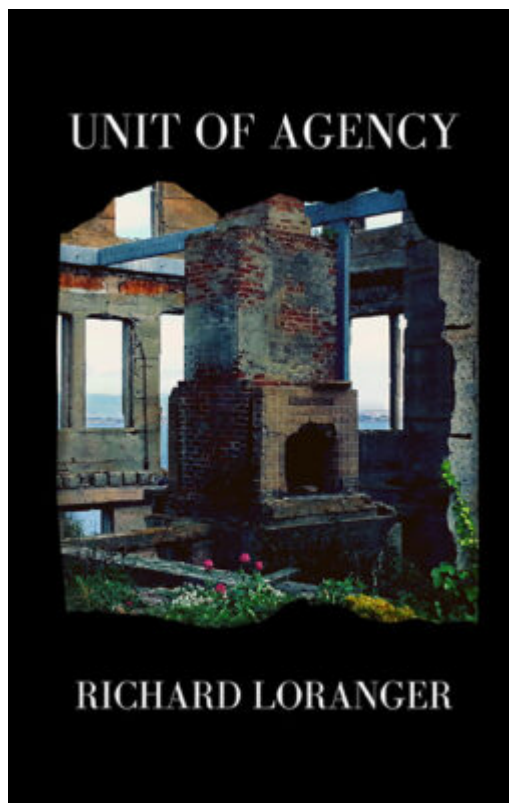
rise earth animal for intricate time  
drum conflict reveal if ardent strive  
watch nerve crisis signs

rise living sentinel of care harbor  
simmer sentient egg conundrum and celebrate  
lift eye to nest

rise breeze winding through sense canyon

release need tensions when will powers  
form new culture junction

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*UNIT OF AGENCY* by Richard Loranger

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