

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

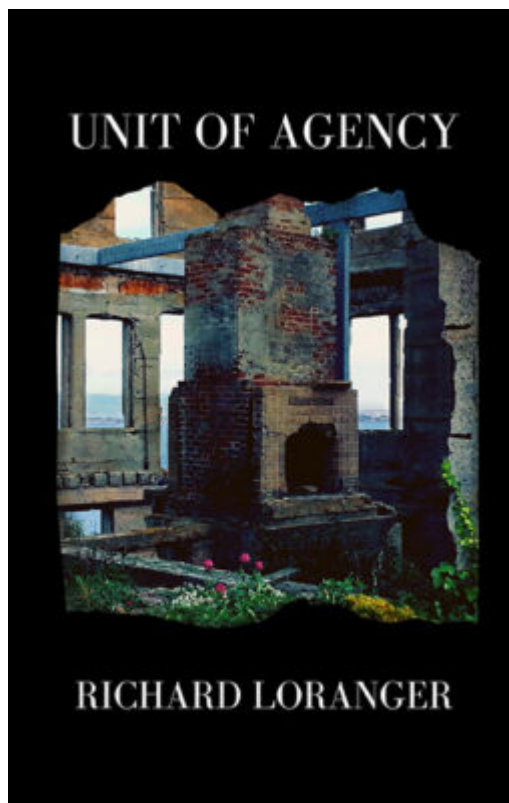
rise earth animal for intricate time
 drum conflict reveal if ardent strive
 watch nerve crisis signs

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

Purchase *UNIT OF AGENCY* by Richard Loranger

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