
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Risa Denenberg: Four Poems

Risa · Saturday, January 8th, 2022

The Plague

Back then, we swam
in oceans of sex. Desire was
the vanguard of our lives.
O how I remember.

*

Avian pox

Morning light breaks and blinds. Blinds and breaks.
I've broken before, know how much it takes.

Calico sky opens and pours. At each corner, more.
What's swiftly broken won't re-open.

Raven at the casement, string of pearls broken.
Can this be fixed? Another nevermore?

Can words be taken back? I dream of sleep.
Waiting for the verdict. No broom to sweep

this rage aside. Breaking fences with a friend.
Harpies have spoken. No words can mend.

*

Anaerobe

Outside this cloistered life,
clouds, eloquent and lofty,
croon odes to haze, praise
the seas, honor the atmosphere—
oxygen, nitrogen, argon, CO2.
See how we breathe in unison.

Inside this husk, the dusk.
I cannot budge the gloomy
gate barring me from heaven's rapture.
A tide pool ripples a note of distress.
Two lives and this gulf, this shoal,
this riptide, between us.

*

Root Rot

I planted clover. I planted monkey grass. I planted simple syrup. Sparrows ate the clover seed and it was good. Mama sparrow planted a nest on my roof and debris is plummeting down the stove pipe scaring the bejesus out of the cats. In the UK, it's against the law to destroy any sort of bird nest, but in the US, house sparrows "are not protected at any time." A flicker is drilling future house-holes in my loft. I planted catnip. The deer ate the monkey grass. The cats hunker down at the screen door wrangling a sneak-out. The so-very-tiny, ruby-throated hummingbird sidestepped the treacle.

Photo credit: Ronda Pizsk Broatch

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