Cultural Daily

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Roberta Beary: Three Poems

Roberta Beary · Wednesday, December 13th, 2017

Roberta Beary identifies as gender-expansive, and writes to connect with the disenfranchised, to let them know they are not alone. She is the author of three books of poems: *Deflections* (Accents Publishing, 2015), *nothing left to say* (King's Road Press, 2009) and *The Unworn Necklace* (Snapshot Press, 2007, 5th ed. 2017) which was a finalist in the Poetry Society of America annual book awards). Beary is the editor of the haiku anthologies *fresh paint* (Red Moon Press, 2014), *7* (Jacar Press, 2013), *dandelion clocks* (Haiku Society of America, 2008) and *fish in love* (Haiku Society of America, 2006). Her work appears in Rattle, KYSO Flash, Beltway Quarterly Review and Haiku In English The First Hundred Years (Norton, 2013). Beary's work has been nominated for Best of the Net and multiple Pushcart Prizes. She lives in County Mayo, Ireland.

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Attic Room: a Tanka Drama in 4 Acts

Act I

Rough hands rip
a butterfly nightie.
Red blots dot
the white sheet
on my sister's bed.

Act II

Beware all men
father son brother.
They can't help it,
Mother says as she
scrubs my sister's bed.

Act III

Night after night
in their double bed
Mother sleeps the sleep of the dead.
On her pink sleep-mask
white poodles prance.

Act IV

It was a bad dream
but what does it matter,
now he's dead, Mother says
and why does your sister
never visit, never call.

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Physical Exam

Uncle Bill cups his hand around my 13-year-old breast. He gives it a few shakes and squeezes, the way mom checks a melon for ripeness. As Uncle Bill strokes his fingers on my nipple, his son Liam, also 13, pokes his head in. Liam gets a smack for his troubles. I get Uncle Bill's signature on my St. Agnes School gym form. On the walk home Mom says how lucky we are to have a doctor in the family, and one who lives so close, one block away. She tells me again how Uncle Bill paid his own way at Princeton by working three jobs. Ivy League, Mom says. She looks at me and frowns. You should be so lucky.

cold front —
my exposed parts
under the quilt

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True Confession

I confuse my husbands sometimes. Forget their names. Forget which one I'm married to. None of this is my fault. A man's vocabulary is more limited than a woman's. Much more. Ask any woman. That's why husbands sound alike, repeating the same dumb sentences. *I'm just trying to help. I'm not a mind reader. That's how you remember it but that's not what I said. Can you slow down for once. Now you're just being irrational. What you said makes no sense. This is the first time I'm hearing it.* Or my favorite. *No matter what I do it's never enough.* One husband says that to me and the other used to say that to me. Right up until he left. Now he probably says it to his new wife. And maybe she thinks it's true. Like I did once. Because I didn't know any better. Not like now. Now I'm an expert. I ought to write a book of dumb things men say to their wives. I bet I'd make a million bucks.

table for two

the waiter uncorks
me on top

(Author photo by Dave Russo)

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