Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Three Poets: Chanel Brenner, Kathleen Blurock, Jean Katz

Chanel Brenner · Thursday, August 30th, 2012

Winner of the national "Words For Riley Poetry Contest," Chanel Brenner is the author of "The Christmas Boy Will Not Disappear," a collection of poems about the death of her six-year-old son. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband and their four-year-old son.
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I Have 2x the Love for 1 Child

Since the death
Of my older son
I worry that the weight
Of my love is too heavy
I often see my son hunched over
The bags of my grief weighing him down
I worry he will get used to it
Bask in it, like the sun
I worry he will come to crave the burn
Find pleasure in the sting of it
I worry that he is forming
Like a rock in a river bed
My grief-ridden
Love rushing over him
Like whitewater
I worry that one-day
A woman will ask him
Why her love is not enough
And he won't know the answer
Just that he needs more.

Kathleen Blurock is a poet, writer, film lover and art hound living in Los Angeles, California. Kathleen reviews fiction, poetry, fashion and the arts at kathleenblurock.blogspot.com. She has written 10 chapbooks, produced and directed a short film a short film on makeup entitled Ritual 93, published interviews with film director Henry Jaglom and actor Viveca Lindfors, and acted in Jaglom's VENICE/VENICE, SHOPPING and HOLLYWOOD DREAMS.
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Summer

There were buckets of cherries that day.
I want to sail straight back,
to peel back the fog of shiny tulle
to the street and the summer and the sun.
It’s only childhood they say
it’s only the pure stream of now that comes from being without.
Try breathing the corn-scented air,
while strains of Benny, Artie, and Louis
float down the sidewalk,
paddling the laughter canoe,
skipping the chalk blocks of Tuesday.
I remember a rolled up newspaper,
the smell of barbecue
and laundry blowing clean,
flashing bright zinnias, roses, marigolds,
petunia-faced fairies that lived in lily valley,
just outside the backdoor.
I could hear them singing, laughing,
their wings beating so near the doorstep,
quiet when the gravel driveway warned them.
And it made a difference
if I went out the front door or the back.
Sometimes I didn’t know what I was doing
until I was out there,
standing under the cherry tree
hidden near the cloud’s door.

Jean Katz is the author of one book of poetry, Chaos and Dancing Stars, two chapters in Future Search in School District Change: Connection, Community, and Results, and eight chapbooks. Her poetry and essays have been published in ONTHEBUS, Spillway, Rattle, Writing for Your Life, The American Rabbi, the Journal of Learning Disabilities, The Journal of Career Educators, Inflections, and FutureSearching. The Wisconsin Library Association selected her as one of the Ten Outstanding Wisconsin Authors of 2003.

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Good Girl

Mother had told me about sex,
The pain, the demands,
the duty, the messy wetness,
the babies,
never the beauty,
the sweet warmth,
the passion.
When I got ready to marry
I went to the doctor for a check-up.
He put me on the scale,

measured my weight and height,
took my blood pressure,
drew some blood from my arm.
He told me, “The hymen
should be broken before marriage.
Then the beginning of marriage
won’t be so painful.”
I did what I was told.
I walked from our flat on Main Street
past the drunks in front of the tavern,
past the county courthouse, bank,
department store, and Montrose Hotel,
up the stairs into the red brick hospital.
Mother walked beside me.
Her face had a long, worried expression.
A nurse took us to a small, bare room
with a standard examining table.
The doctor told Mother to wait outside.
I lay down on the table,
and put my feet up in the cold stirrups.
I spread my knees wide,
showing my private place
to a stranger for the first time.
The nurse stood beside the doctor
as he broke the hymen
with a small sharp instrument.
The nurse helped me to sit up.
She gave me a pad to wear
in case of bleeding.
I walked home with Mother,
a good girl,
ready for marriage.
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Young as Ever

It’s time to grow a soul,
deeper than the creases on my face.
A friend says,
“As the creases deepen,
the vision blurs,
so we stay
as young as ever,”
but young as ever
is not my goal.
The years are writing
poems on my face.

Image between the poems: Detail from ‘Remembrance’ by Los Angeles fiber artist Lori

Zimmerman.

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