

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Tony Magistrale: Three Poems

Tony Magistrale · Wednesday, November 7th, 2018

Let Me Die Like a Dog

In place of her usual five o'clock supper
without any whining despite the pain
surrounded by those she knew and loved her still,
the perfect dog inhabiting a less-than-perfect
body, her sixteen-year-old arthritic hips and legs
gone inflexible as metal bars,
placed her soft face one more time into my hands
at the moment the vet injected her left thigh
with a combination muscle relaxant and blue
end-of-the-world cocktail. I watched
both weary brown eyes,
adrift in milky cataracts,
descend slowly into slits that would not again
open, and I was never more uncertain
whether to curse the curse of earthly mutability
or issue eternal thanks for the gift bestowed.

*

Making Plans

If you please, no cold, dank earthen hole
for me. After an expeditious and thorough
burning, the distributing of my dusky parts
upon the brightly-lit ground floor of Saks,
a thin coat along the marble corridors of commerce,
where what remains of me might cling to the bottoms
of fabulous shoes, transported across Manhattan,
while the rest is left in close proximity
to *Women's Fragrances*, their aromatic blossoms
crushed into liquid mist.

*

I Once Dated a Countess

Standing alone together on a balcony drinking champagne
above panoramic seascape display
strands of errant hair blowing her perfume into my mouth,

she exhaled something softly in French.
I begged her to repeat it,
or at least say it in *Anglais*, damn it,
but she gave back only a tiny
sequined laugh, shake of coiffed head,
and, Daisy Buchanan-like, floated out of the room.

She told strangers she was a countess,
though her couture handbags

were all knock-offs
purchased from bearded Algerian men
huddled on blankets in shadowy passageways
off the *Champs Elysees*.

She drank tap water from ornamental flutes,
ordered the most expensive Margaux on the menu,
bathed in porcelain tubs filled with Evian spring water,
sauntered the length of crowded beaches
wearing ball gowns and a tiara,

invited me to meet for cocktails at four
only to remember at three-thirty
an appointment with her manicurist.

This was how it was with her:
mousse au chocolat every meal, every day,

until I couldn't stomach another bite.

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