

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Wendy Rainey: Two Poems

Wendy Rainey · Friday, October 17th, 2025

My Sister's Party

I was just about to leave my sister's party.
We hadn't been close since we were kids.
Her invitation had come as a surprise.
Grabbing my purse, taking one last sip of wine,
I heard one of her friends,
someone she had worked with
for decades,
*You never mentioned
you had a sister.*
Her friends looked at one another.
They looked at her,
waiting for a response.
My heart sank
as I rose from my chair.
Walking to the back door,
opening the screen,
I turned around,
to look at her.
She was throwing her hair back,
talking with another group,
pouring wine into their glasses.
I walked out the door,
down the steps,
to my car.
I turned around again
to look at my sister
one last time.
Music pulsated through the air,
all the way down to the sidewalk.
She must have said something funny
because the whole party
burst into laughter.

*

The Old Poet

The Old Poet
wears Birkenstocks with socks,
sings Sondheim
while driving the Hollywood Freeway.
Still has John Thomas's address
in his wallet,
scrawled on a scrap of paper
from 1978.

The Old Poet
bares his neck,
showing me the "vampire bite"
he got from a woman
he met in 1986.
*She was into the occult,
wicca, the supernatural,*
he laughs.
*The doctor doesn't know
why it won't heal.
I guess I'm marked
for life.*

The Old Poet
says he hates poets,
hates poetry readings,
wanders into them religiously.
Leaves laughing and limping
after performing the bell step
three times,
while singing a medley of Lady Gaga hits.

The Old Poet cries
during a performance of South Pacific.
When I hand him a tissue,
he whispers,
*I've hurt people.
A lot of people.*
The Old Poet tears up
when I ask him
why he wears torn clothes
with holes in them.
*I'm ugly.
I've always felt ugly.
Why don't we go shopping.*

Get you some new clothes?
 No, The Old Poet says,
it's part of my persona.

The Old Poet marvels
 at the provocative poems
 of an up-and-comer,
 then scoffs
 after attending her reading,
 muttering,
she's just getting off on herself.
She'll buy her way in
like the others...

I ask The Old Poet
 if he's a sociopath.
I don't think it wise
to put labels on people.
 He takes a forkful of green corn tamale,
 dips it in salsa.
 I look at The Old Poet,
You're not well.
This isn't fun anymore.

I'll ruin you, you know.
I'll poison the well, he smiles,
 leaning back in his chair,
 sipping his coffee.
A well-placed email,
a few comments
to the right people,
and you're finished.
 The Old Poet shakes his head,
 his baritone laughter
 bellows through the room,
 echoing off the walls,
 reverberating
 into the stratosphere.

Well, if this is who you really are
then have at it.
You'll be sorry,
 The Old Poet says,
 getting up to put on his jacket.
You'll never amount to anything.
We'll see about that, I say to The Old Poet.
 I look out the window.
It's really raining out there.
Drive safely.

The Old Poet
walks out the door,
onto the street,
alone,
among so many,
many
people.

(Featured image from [Pexels](#))

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