

YOU CAN ALWAYS
FIND YOURSELF
BY THE MOON

or

KEEPING AN AMERICAN VIGIL

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For Kate

Some of the following work has been published in *The Argotist On-line* and *Avatar*.

Make Hay While the Sun Shines (Old Dime)

hue & tint of Vermeers yellow flowers old leather gloves butter.
Let us leave the issue of dying: One can find oneself by the moon:
Besides, you are a bit curious about the other side
after all these years of passion for the green planet we're on
with the golden ricks on old, wintering air..

You might have hidden under the crawl-space of mother's house.
Gray, clock mouse. Gash on the cheek But you fell in love with a linguist
whose death tore the tongue out of grieving.
You might have sat under a Mississippi bridge & cried all night
years after your husband
died of tainted cow brains
with a man who cried too. He overcame his wound, you never did.
While your husband was out often when young,
you went watering the glass
(till you could see thru it.) purity & surprise, putting Nantucket in your raincoat
pocket.

Your world is
re-visioned: *inwarding*:
rain will soon dot the dark pool. You arch like a cat your spine:
waters flow under the bridge of your body
gymnast:
You cull longing, spool it. Lick the cream of dream-
relations.

Night is the color slate-roof with soapstone sheen.
The truck rolls thru town:
"Who's keeping you warm?" Columbia Fuels.

This recurrence
is a result of your being in poverty:
the truck blew up, you could not go for monthly checkups.

That check bounced.
It's been canceled.
But you've kept your rendezvous with the gods, the ones who haven't been betrayed
by time.

If I could implant *this* village with *these* clouds curved like swans
neck behind your eye the way ocular implants come
from Clearwater, Florida. . .

No way.

Inverno:

Winter: Let us cut our losses at this.

Ice-sculpture: I watch circling Pacific Mobile Veterinary Station.

One goes alone toward the alone.

The dark air goes down & a cry goes up, out of sight like a parachute: reverse-
motion.

You Have Started Up This Foxy Engine

linking me with you again:
my carbine: blue, boxed breathing machine.
now going on oxygen, a glower in a jar
violet:
dragging about the pad.
I care not that the violas wear hoods, nor that the frost hangs
between branches of trees
white fog
sculptural
surreal:
like coal in boxcars:
O cask Lass
sitting under a New Orleans bridge one night
crying about being stabbed:
Like the Magical Boy, perpetual child, you cast no shadow:
your bones *define thinness*
as your lavish spirit spills images, *copious*: Cornucopia, Horn of Plenty:
defines expense: the spent fuel of a mile and a half long coal train
thru the mountains
and over the plain:
coming into this apple-green American vigil of a dawn.

U-Boat Poem

Burgundy

Rugby players yesterday in our land, up North huddled in a
scrum.

The Luggable Loo

all you packed for earthquake
is packed with string, buckle, thong. In the hall awaiting disaster.

Between festival
& disaster I write.
Under the umbrels.

In memory U-boats come. Shadow-boats, one of the last mysteries of war.
I never looked for flames
as they dug their shoes into fog

Marathon signs yolk-yellow are left out in the rain
from yesterday, Sunday in our town
when runners came from 18 countries around the world

while Greyhound Depots
apples & oranges & birds, Molotov cocktails, espionage & Colt 45s all
disappear behind first snowscrim, a blindout screen.

Don't Tune into All Your Stations at Once

Ravens caw
echoes in the bowl of sky.
Blackness, feathers, italicize silence. After cacophony, crystal.

Separating the lost voice
from x-ray

(the oncologist flicked the light under, as easily as lighting a reefer, so you saw
the planets growing in ribs. Bone.)

Yesterday's news would have slaughtered an ox,
But I became a bird, photographed the miniature
of earthly disasters

till they looked like festivals,
or illustrations
for an ancient botany.

Could have killed an ox:

but I became a bird & sailed over it
waters & flowed under it air & flowed, blue, around & around it.

Then rain
fell on the pages
bent them the way light bends water or metal.

Yet there were those moments my oil-bright dot of a bird's eye overlooked
over-weathered the scene overmastering larger things like
Canada geese flying South, bodies like bowling pins.

Spur On This Reluctant Week

Kickstart September.

Jumpstart rage.

Life's all the colors of moss & ash, drab & lash
of language: egg, box. Rose scarf, to boot.

Ginger Mang the cat is on the sill with her 9 lives & that's that.
Ashes & Roses, Moss & Snow:

At twilight

my world is always the word & the ward: from here to now.

Reversion.

How push my childhood from me?

It is the third rail which conducts electricity.

Way-Laid

for Tim Healy & my Canadian

Way-laid,
Sweeping Winter street the blast,
shovels of steel. Land the hard color of burnt raspberry, or
blunt teal.

Goggles & earpieces clean as steel.
Pilot, stall not, hand on the lever
sail stiles & rills of cumulus & ribcage clouds until
the body of the sky is palpable:
blade hits teal
cloud
a crescendo. Light peels off.

*

My sweet, sweeping Deal Street
hipboots, raspberry wool stockings,
ever turned on by tall & thin?
I am.

Listen. Until
pilot bounces light off silver wings
& ice pinwheels spill
iridescent.

Till periwinkle cross-country skis go, throwing
shape of crucifix below
I will love you, my Clodia, our love daring as his thrilling
career: lived out day-by-day
in pewter beaten sun or rain.

100%.

Field-mice, like stones, dormant:
it was war. No butter. Rations bitter.
And always & forever winter.

Now, steep earth, love ceiling:
Rowing with Anne, cabin-fever, ribcage aching after radiation
oars over torn water, slipped into oar-locks, *put paid* to healing.

LYNN STRONGIN was born in New York City. She has made British Columbia, Canada her home for the past 25 years, taking advantage of British dialects to enrich her work. In the 1960s, she worked for Denise Levertov in politically active Berkeley. Her poems have been published in several countries including: Italy, England, Canada, Scotland and the USA. She has 7 published books, and her work is in 30 anthologies, and 55 journals (online and in print). She is also the recipient of two PEN grants, and one NEA creative writing grant. Journals her poetry has appeared in include: *Shenandoah*, *The American Voice*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Poetry*. Her anthology *The Sorrow Psalms: A Book of Twentieth Century Elegy* will be published by the University of Iowa Press in 2006; and she will have a forthcoming summer feature in *Action*.

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