

Jeremy Paden © 2012

Silence prolongs its  
 stay, a lover grown distant,  
 nothing to pass between  
 us, but this  
 lingering in the doorway,  
 and then you offer  
 watermelon, cold,  
 brought up just this afternoon  
 from the well, melon meant  
 for someone else, left  
 in the dark water too long  
 then given by you to me,  
 with the *dolmas* leftover  
 from yesterday's meal.

Lagniappe

Ashley McWaters © 2012

Tonight, I watch my husband sleep. He is dark  
 amid the grey dark, the terrorist. It helps me  
 to think that violent people also snore. It helps  
 me to think of a little seed of mercy here and there.  
 I sometimes practice seeing my infant son  
 as the terrorist's son. I think, *His son will also*  
*amaze him by waving for the first time, by calling*  
*his parents by name*. I'm not sure what I'm looking  
 for this exercise to do. It's a little like quizzing  
 yourself in a second language to see if you've still  
 got it. It even resembles another language, this process  
 of carrying away the rough sides of the imagination,  
 of delivering the mind's eye away from fear.  
 We remember too much: so we forget, gestures of faith  
 take practice. And peace takes peace. And we make  
 each other. And making each other takes seeing light  
 in the mind's eye, takes knowing: how dreams make real.

Dreams

Kik Williams © 2012

He's standing on the median in front  
 Of the traffic light holding a sign  
 I know it says *homeless*  
 A light mix of rain and snowfall  
 It's cold his parker is unzipped  
 I dig around in my change purse  
 Put my window down and hand him a five  
 He's tall slender handsome gray at the sides  
 In a red hat.  
 "Excuse me, may I have the sugar?"  
 He said  
 And held out his hand.  
 "I'm fine, thank you for asking"  
 She said  
 And passed the milk.  
 They blinked  
 Then laughed.  
 And he used  
 The milk.  
 It was a start.

Jesus, Another Beggar

Dawn Nikithser © 2012

Once upon a time, a man  
 In a brown sweater walked into a coffee shop  
 And ordered tea  
 With steamed milk.  
 When he wanted sugar, he went  
 To the napkin stand to get it but  
 There was a woman  
 In a red hat.  
 "Excuse me, may I have the sugar?"  
 He said  
 And held out his hand.  
 "I'm fine, thank you for asking"  
 She said  
 And passed the milk.  
 They blinked  
 Then laughed.  
 And he used  
 The milk.  
 It was a start.

Their Eyes Were Full Of Starbucks

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*Indulgences* by Valerie Nieman

*Mojo* by Lois Marie Harrod

*Their Eyes Were Full Of Starbucks*  
 by Dawn Nikithser

*Jesus, Another Beggar* by Kik Williams

*Dreams* by Ashley McWaters

*Lagniappe* by Jeremy Paden



Indulgences

All that'll save me from the fiery furnace  
 is the small servanthood  
 of replacing the toilet paper roll  
 in the office rest room.

Or maybe handing a buck  
 to the shave-headed boy at Kmart,  
 caught mute at the difference  
 between his desire and his crumpled means.

Alms given without tax deduction  
 might put a thumb on the scales of justice,  
 but I believe that what'll free me  
 is moving turtles to the side of the road:

Soles scorched on hell's fresh asphalt,  
 lungs filled with sulfur,  
 I'll be caught up, unburdened,  
 by something given sometime I don't recall.

Valerie Nieman © 2012

Mojo

After Stephen could no longer stand,  
 Mojo came to his bed  
 and stretched out at his feet  
 before padding gently onto his chest  
 and settling down, softly,  
 and Stephen's hands  
 which had been clawing the air  
 settled onto the back of the cat,  
 quiet little Tai Chi strokes,  
 and Mojo began to purr  
 until at last Stephen's hands  
 rested a bit. Then Mojo  
 would step off his chest  
 and settle at his ear or above his head,  
 and become that deep black circle of sleep  
 which Stephen was seeking.

Lois Marie Harrod © 2012