

The Minor Poet Questions His Treachery

Why write, if not for you, my love of sorts
and out, sitting cross from me, deep
in your *Death in Vienna* with its nods

to Agatha and Dorothy, today's closed room
mystery: two logorrhethics dining on tripe
while Poirot and Lord Peter Wimsey

decide which one scribed the botched deed.
Poirot has settled on me, the one
with the inky tongue, but Wimsey

says you did it, pricking the afternoon
with your deadly stileto the way
I jab a word or four without remorse.

The Minor Poet Tries Haiku

Stinkbug hibernating
in Manny's suitcase—
been there since Tennessee.

Manny sips his morning chai,
too noisy, can't write,
all the lattes chattering.

Tattered scarecrow
left in the wild oats—
never did more than watch.

Steamy bath,
Manny plops in—
ouch!

Cold rain falling
and no umbrella—
Manny takes yours.

That's the mystery,
said the minor poet.

I don't get it,
said the mystery writer,
short works.

At the Artists' Colony

No . . . like . . . elaboration.

*Mom broke her hip.
Joan had her baby.*

Just the facts.

Better, she thought,
in the pre-tech past
when long-distance calls
charged by the minute.

The Minor Poet Contemplates Minimalism

from *Nightmares of the Minor Poet*

The library room appears empty
except for stacks of metal chairs.
No one there to help. The poet disassembles
the racks into rows. Her black pants
and turtleneck collect dust and hair.
She notices the custodian uses this room
to store toilet mops. The facilitator arrives,
egg yolk in his beard. He disapproves
of her configuration, snarls, turns
the chairs the other way.
There is no podium. Four disheveled
graybeards bumble in. Each carries
a three-ring chaos of scribbles.
The facilitator says, "This poet needs no
introduction" and does not introduce her.
During her first poem about the rusty sedan
in the Quick Chek parking lot,
several high school kids enter—then a homeless,
he must be homeless, man with electric hair.
The room begins to smell like a urinal.
The poet reads her poem about over-watering
the petunias while the students trade wads
of verse in the back row. They seem to have
a bottle of gin, but do not offer her a swig.

If the world had been his aviary,
he would have been the lesser bird,
unable to sing the high notes
or the low though he knew enough
of depression to spill himself
into that well which is the world.
And perhaps that was his purpose,
he thought, a beak that might bring
to the surface just enough water to sustain
someone, anyone, passing by,
not for eons or years, but an hour . . . less,
just until she trod a little farther on
and found a fresh stream, where she
could sit, maybe listen.

The Minor Poet

The Minor Poet Is Knocked for a Loop

She understood words the way
astronomers understood the universe,
how *cosmos* could knock her for a loop
in the knocking shop, for what else
the big bang and slow unraveling
of cord and ribbon? How describe
the stars, the paths they were taking,
rolling forever down memory lane?
And she, she was the cat chasing them,
or she had been until she was knocked up
by the cool cat down the street. Well,
goodbye to him, she'd grown her own
multiverses in the cabbage patch,
and after three or four got a loop
which led to red dwarfs and intrauterine
bleeding. One of those white midgets,
was a progeriac, no knocker
in the knocking shop there, just
a old looker, lock me out.

Please recycle to a friend!

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By fille de la ville

Origami Poetry Project™

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