

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