

My Lover's Hair Is Blonde Or Black

1

He wears shadows of your friends,
nameless enemies,
stays awake in rented rooms,
and only sleeps between us.
Sometimes he calls with flashing lights,
beeping of alarms. You follow him
through alibis, loopholes in my smile,
and when you're lost, discover
flowers from my garden, poems on
grocery lists.
My lover's more than you suspect,
everything you dream.

2

You wake me and say
"be logical, it all makes sense,
remember that afternoon,
you stood on the stain on the living
room floor, holding a laundry basket,
your eyes sending signals through
the T.V. to the laughing man behind my
back.
It all makes sense, remember,
remember..."

3

You paint an image.
Tones are bloody, you brighten
with my fear. When I say
"what looks like me isn't real,"
you scowl and answer, "if I'm wrong,
there's truth in fantasy."

4

10 P.M. you find
your clothes reordered
on our bed

inform me
this morning you set
the shirt precisely
a foot from the sweater,
its black buttons perpendicular
to the pillow planted
in the middle of the quilt

5

You seize my wrists
smell my hands,
my breath.

Crouching. Your shadow
on the wall
unlocks my thighs,
makes secret measurements.
Wetness is a clue,
dryness an offence.

Pumping against white sheets,
probing tears, interrogating
screams. True or false
it all adds up.

You zero in.

Donna Langevin

The Survivor

Because the teacher
beat her in school
for being a Jew
Because the Poles
broke down the door
with heavy boots
Because the camps
taught cruelty
not books
she never learned
to read

Because her hand
is deformed
from some torture
performed upon her
Because she fears
errors can be fatal
Because her thoughts
are dark animals
who bite
she never learned
to write

This life has left
bitterness in her mouth
the way orange rind does
when a small piece
stubbornly clings
to the sweet fruit flesh
and you eat it
not meaning to

Finally, at sixty,
she's learning to read
the words proceed
across the page
like a parade
she wants to follow
In her twisted hand
she holds a pen
and in small, shaky scrawl
writes her own name.

Kathryn Daniels

Another refugee poem

When he pulls up his sleeve
to show us the scab on his elbow
where he fell off the bicycle
donated by the Refugee Help
and I see again his forearm, striped
with the long combings of luxuriant hair
I crumple and shout aloud
I am slung into a sack of dark cloud
its seams drawn tight with leather thongs
and diminishing over the rooftops

My mind blinks, the room is the same
no one has moved, or spoken.
Or, someone said inconsequential words,
perhaps myself.

Is there no other woman
so afflicted? My age
deranges me with sudden lust,
I am powerless, encapsulated.

His sleeve falls back, but his forearm
fumes like lightning's after-image
across my retina. I pour out more tea.
Another year, or two, surely I will have learned
How to be in this marvellous world and not of it.

Heather Spears

Residuals

if we could erase
all sexual images
which depict violence
degrade women
men and children
sex and intimacy

if we could separate out
good images
from bad ones
right from wrong
sex from violence

if we could decide
what was truly erotic
not distorted
or unreal
or fused with pain

would there be any sound left
any visual image
any
thing

Judith Posner

From The Word for Sand (Toronto: Wolsak and Wynn, 1988).