

Poetry

ELIZABETH KOUHI

Heritage

Strong arms mid-wife

calves, breasts nurture

babies, hips sway to building

brush piles (burning new clearings)

shoulders heave with hoe

and rake, able hands

shape loaves, voices ring

sure and confident

in evening kitchens and

public meetings,

and in my head

and in my head.

HEATHER SPEARS

Sauna

So warm in here I lie low;

one arm at rest up the grainy wood

reaches into deliberate, real heat

where my fingers smoke like candles.

Tough, you're grinning, up in the thick
of it,

legs swinging off the platform,

blurred demon. From your body

sweat leaks, runs down in big, loose
drops

that spread along my sides

warm as let wounds.

Infernal surgeon, you're untouchable

in the cowl of sulphurous heat —

and I want to slide somehow out of
myself

romantically rise

to you through its intensifying,

into imagined cruelty,

your eyeballs burning and surely

burning

lungs and viscerals, where we could be
fire swallows, my mouth finally
blistered to your mouth,
where you might even begin
to peel off sections of your basted skin,
and lay them sizzling across me.

Arm, belly, breast, why
you'd be my armour then, your tactile
harm

closing around me, I can smell inci-
sions,

flesh going up in steam,
in sweetness, like god food,
prophecy —

no good. You'll have to come down.
Closeup, your eyes lose focus, the lines
around your mouth define some
region I have not yet travelled on;

JUDITH STUART

Community Services

I. Intake

She sits a hotel towel in her hands
hands at her face blood-roses bloom
through rough cloth

Her name? Last name first
spell that again and slowly
Leave the OHIP wheel her down
3rd door to the left doctor's waiting
(and aside) Did you see her?

II. Surgery

She's fading out on the guerny
tries to speak a crimson tear slides
from the havoc in her eyes

What a mess let's have that needle
yes you'll be right in no time
no time now the sutures
She's dropping off Christ!
What a mess.

III. Wardroom

She sleeps Invisible Woman
engauzed from hairline to chin thin
throat naked bandaged hands suppli-
cant

Her husband let her have it with a
bottle
fighting drunk shit! welfare cases,

sure
three kids with CAS now
better off, too stupid cow
some women ask for trouble

IV. Social Assistance

She sits across the desk
a map of scars scream furrows
on the plain of her face blunt hands
punctuate
the sentence of her life

It's my fault too no job
he hates a cold dinner kids were
wild
he couldn't help himself well
neighbours called the cops
Now he's at The Don I need work
to get the kids back I need day care
to get work I asked the church for
help
they gave me clothes please
now I'm here please!
what d'you say?

JENNIFER JONES

I was cautious of him

I was cautious of him

always
although he was a regular churchgoer,
a fine father some would say
heartily
and heartily I would agree

and then remember
the fine flash of silver
well-oiled
on a cupboard
in the cellar

just in case.

(unloaded
of course)
they always are

until
some
lark happy
trigger hapsome
one
blunders.