

“faraway.” Then the job in Montreal had come up.

She knows she should start “investing” in the here and now. She is struck, as usual, by the emptiness of her large living room ... a white leather sofa, a small table and the tv. Perhaps she should give a dinner party for people from work. That would mean buying a dining room set, unpacking her good dishes and finding her tablecloths. Whom would she invite and why, and could they even begin fill this vacuum?

She doesn't want small incremental measures of adjustment. What she wants is to scream, her voice piercing the sound-proofed walls. “Fools, hypocrites,” she wants to shriek. “You with your prayer rugs, crucifixes, jargon and silences! What do you really know about human suffering? What do you know about having to pick through shards and stones to construct a life you don't want to live?”

Irene wants her thin hair to fly in unruly clouds around her blood-suffused face, her veined eyes popping through facial distortions. She wants to be the very cartoon of a “Crazy Lady.” She wants to scrawl a letter in oily black ink, revealing to Phil the ugly but true passions that coursed through her during their many dispassionate conversations: “How do you think I feel seeing what we built up together going to a bunch of eunuchs in Oregon?”

She won't write to Phil. She knows he would not answer. His silence, she comprehends, will accompany all her brave efforts at living. It will be there for the duration.

Greta Hofmann Nemiroff co-taught the first university-level Women's Studies course in Canada in 1970. Over the years she has published numerous stories and articles in both English and French and also edited and written several books. She currently teaches English, Humanities and Women's/Gender Studies at Dawson College in Montreal.

CAROLE GLASSER LANGILLE

Stir

I can hide like a thief
but the heart is a policeman at the crossroads
who forces me out in the open. Outside,
where the earth is seeded, day
cedes its place. Water has picked up
the last shred of light and carried it away. *Hush.*
Evening is a great brooding dog. I want to leave
and not be followed. If I know a psalm, it's this: *journey*
is a type of singing, suffused with dance,
sufficing. The Sufis had it right. No one
is refused. The great lie is this: that voyage means
going. Each time I venture out,
I am always led inward, stumbling, hurtling,
as if falling were succeeding. Who holds up
whom? No one steals away.

Carole Glasser Langille's fourth book of poetry, Church of the Exquisite Panic: The Ophelia Poems was published in October 2012. It was recently nominated for The Atlantic Poetry Prize.

A. MARY MURPHY

I don't want to be an old crazy person

I don't want to be an old crazy person
muttering around the streets
collecting cigarette butts
various brands
I don't smoke
but what if I take it up
what if none of the butts are my brand
what if I don't live somewhere warm
have to pick up stubby things
with mittens on my hands
being old will be bad enough

A. Mary Murphy's poetry appears earlier in this volume.