MARY AITKEN

Blue Notes

Like a blue note, like any jazzy improvisation, you slipped between the conventional notes of my life.

Like a blue note, you had no easy interpretation, no casual explanation, you were grand, adding subtle overtones not easily identified.

Like a blue note, you spoke to my soul somewhere in the ether where music balances between the player and the listener. You sounded in those spaces that exist between heartbeats and between breaths. You resonated deep and lively and strong.

Like a blue note, you still are here in this space in this time in this existence now wherever a musician offers to play you will be there, sounding your blue note. As always.

—In memory of Alan Roy Galbraith Ritchie

Mary Aitken is 65 years old and the recent developer of a web site entitled Women-praying-for-peace.org. She wrote “Blue Notes” in memoriam for a very dear family friend, Alan Roy Galbraith Ritchie who died far too young.

KATHY ASHBY

For the Second Time

the mother yells one of her daily drugged-up duteous drawls rehearsed since some sixties’ show. With her head tilted up towards the stairs her voice cracks on the “school” part of “Hurry up Pumpkin you’ll be late for” “Schoooooool” mocks the older son, her dropout. Then he hides a smirk behind a bite of buttery toast knowing indifference will bounce back her glare which will then fall on the daughter, the one without a shell. She imagines her mother sees the loss of virginity in the sore at the raw corner of her mouth. Not until elbows liquefy and melt off the edge of the table does she sense her gaze move off her case. Taking a distant look she momentarily dips into her mother’s space, imagines, feels and subconsciously imprints herself with future pain. She watches how repeatedly rinsed and squeezed under wrinkled hands the kitchen cloth sweeps clean earnest expectations like those recurring crumbs left on the counter.

Kathy Ashby is an award-winning hot glass artist since the early 1970’s, who now lives and works in the wilderness of Muskoka, Ontario with her husband and son. She has been extensively published, notably as a guest Columnist in the Toronto Star Arts Section.