

Proverbs

The one who pets the scorpion
with the hand of compassion and receives punishment
is not unlike the woman who throws her cabbage to the fire
while the beloved moose marked for death will be spared.
Such is the way of the world.

When you throw cakes at a man, he will throw cakes at you.
Forgive him should his goats have udders
for they shall be larger than yours.
Lo, the quiet duck places its foot on the oblivious worm.
Such is the way of the world.

Never ask the man to do what you can do for yourself
or like the squirrel taken from the water
he shall plot against you.
In death, the poet and the pig shall finally be loved.
Such is the way of the world. So be it.

A Second Ago

The sun shone down on a mirror
and was instantly blinded by
its own brilliance. Simultaneously,
a bodhisattva wisely got off
her high horse to get on
a shorter horse.
We sighed without knowing why.
In another world, we would.
Elsewhere, the sun illumined
an illustrious family of prairie dogs
yapping with dirt-clawed joy.
Their thoughts look like dandelions!
The trees adjusted their leaves, just a little.
Somebody with a rabbit hopped on a train.
And just as a million Lutherans googled your name,
high on an overpass, an older man
watched the bright cars beading the freeway.
He thought not about the traffic
but of abandoning
his cheap suit to the winds
to rustle like sails across green seas or
to hurtle like a polyester rocket into the sun.

Kiosk Made of Whispers

A man once crossed the road
to put lip balm on his bill
but that is another story.
The man crosses the road
for the kiosk on the other side:
a kiosk made of whispers.
A man seeks
a vial of insinuations
and this is the best place
outside of Nantucket.
Everyone knows that
including the priest, the rabbi, and
the duck
but those are different stories.
The man wants more zing
in his pear-shaped world
but is ill-equipped for debauchery.
Inside the kiosk, a shadow flutters
towards a man who rises
as smoke from the fire
of another story.

Parking Lot Man

I used to be happy with my little lot.
It even thrilled me to think of the people
and the cars I'd be writing down on my clipboard.
Every day, it gave me secret pleasure
to dream up nicknames like:

stupid lazy silver PT Cruiser snob lady or
falling-apart green Nova geezer even-older-than-me
or busted-up Dodge pickup swing-shift Mexican stiff.

I like watching people, inventing lives.
It's better than what you can get on the TV.
For the last sixty years, this lot has been
my bread, my peace, my home, my heart.
Although lately alone in my booth,
all I can think about is how rundown I feel.

All these cars, all day long:
coming in, going out like the tide.
And me, beached and bone-white,
an old shipwreck peering out of the sands.

Yet bit-by-bit I sense myself drifting back . . .