vinegary wine, piss-water—to go with his enormous piece of greasy chicken. For which he does deserve the saw.
And in the Cosmos, at the counter, in front of the salt and pepper and sitting on one of those heavenly wobbly stools the color it turns out of blood, it matches the ripped open veins, he whipped up his rage and yelled, he pounded his fist and shook the shakers, he spilled his coffee, he spilled a cupful of blood, he pulled a handful of patterned paper napkins out of the streamlined holder to sop up the liquids and in the midst since he was thoughtful as well as berserk, he watched the brown which is the color of coffee with milk spread forth as water on sand spreads forth, he was awakened and walked, so to speak, at the edge so his toes wouldn’t turn too cold too soon, or walked on his hands, he once could do that, and at a certain point in space as well as time, the brown on the white just stopped forever, then he took his sword, which was a fork as light as tin and cut two heads off—shaker heads—and he was sapient enough to know that he was not only I. but C. as well, at least a little, C. from Spain, that maimed and stricken lantzman who saw everything at once—I’d call it a curse—and tilted at shakers, and so on, then he charged at enemies and he was alone in the field and probably had a talking horse or an unarmed jeep with a canvas top, and fuck the trees, he wouldn’t stand behind a tree, and fuck the holes, he wouldn’t dig one if his life depended on it, and surely it did,
Imagine now what he has to do, if he walks, say, one block east or one block south, what does it matter? that is, what he has to say, not do, the most he can do is take his clothes off like his great-granddaddy did, or sit down featherless and drink a chai à la mode, except in America there is no freedom to sit or walk naked in public and anyhow the chill wind bloweth and what about paunches and hanging breasts and flat unfattened buttocks, and what about Everyday Zen and Mu and Early Capitalism and Breath and Eye to Eye and Erich Fromm and Wittgenstein—and Comedy and Tragedy—was I a comedian?
XV.

And while he ate a bird he moved one dish to the left, one spoon to the right, for he was also compulsive and counted steps for starters and with his mind and its fingers he moved the shakers to each side of the dish for they were now cherubim and underneath the chicken was the mercy-seat which James in its wisdom calls the Ark’s cover and it was made of gold which I.’s dish wasn’t and there was a length and a width described, for G. he also was compulsive as well as pure.
XXIV.

And it was in that Greenpoint
one or two landed who called themselves by the weird name
of remnant for they were at most just rugs that you could
flatten and pile them up on a table and sell them
cheapo, though the ones who arrived preferred
by and large “you people” as in the phrase
“you people, for sale, cheapo” and some felt they
were on the road back, since it was Brooklyn and some
felt they were going forward for east was east
one way or another though maybe they were
getting it backwards, given the phrase “go west,
you people,” sunrise, sunset, you people had
it all, for quickly go the years, and I.,
he knew the words, and he could sing and it could
be in Poland, and there’s an oil spill underground
and you should hear the Mobil/Exxon people
deny, deny; and I. loved most the moss that
covered the rocks and the waves coming in and the rats.
XXVII.

he should talk, he’s rolling in dough, and feels compromised—and abandoned—he should change places with the one in the dirty red T-shirt, the one who asked him for four dollars to buy a Metro card, then he could live with the fleas and smell the river forever—maybe it’s hardness, hardness is the word—that’s better, he thinks than just “indifference” but he still likes “entitled,” as W. is entitled, he sneers when he talks, and he can’t bear opposition or disagreement and scolds with a quivering voice; as there are skunks in chairs who dip their tails in ink or their assholes and spread their stink—though no one can make you cry again for you are dry and what is the use of going through that again; but I. can’t help interfering for that is what he does, he intervenes, he is insulting, he lost jobs, he was shunned, he embarrassed his wives, he was emotional, wasn’t G. himself emotional? Didn’t M. make him cry?
Afterword

*Stern and the Abandoned Temple*

Alicia Ostriker