

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Armine Iknadossian: Two Poems

Armine Iknadossian · Wednesday, October 4th, 2017

Beirut-born, Southern California-raised Armine Iknadossian is the author of *United States of Love & Other Poems* (2016). She has been published in *Margie*, *Pearl*, *Rhino*, *Split This Rock*, *Alabama Literary Review*, *The Nervous Breakdown* and elsewhere.

[alert type=alert-white]Please consider making a tax-deductible donation now so we can keep publishing strong creative voices.[/alert]

Kid Napping

I have 30 minutes before the children awake,
 wrinkled thumbs soaked,
 eyes small with sleep. I sit
 under one of California's oldest oak trees
 with the video monitors next to me.
 I lift a cigarette to my lips and digress
 to the smell of my mother's hair as she lifts
 me, wet with tears and urine, tangled
 in soaked sheets and blankets.
 Not even two, I was left
 asleep. My parents walked over
 to Avo's for a round of cribbage.
 20 minutes now, and the children rustle.
 I hustle another cigarette out of my purse
 and listen to the rescue copters circling
 Millard Canyon where hikers go missing every week.
 Millard, where the native Hahamog'na lived
 before Portola made his messy bed there.
 10 minutes, and the crow circles the nests
 where my friend the Blue Jay just fed her newborns.
 It is May, that mother of all months,
 when the Arroyo dries up, children skip classes
 and everyone leaves their windows open
 for the cool breeze to steal in from the coast.

They are cooing now, but I was screaming alone
that night before they came for me, rushing in together,
eyes big with worry, huddled over me like conspirators
as they unwrapped me gently with their sorry hands.

Obligatory Grandmother Poem

Whether we ever knew them, whether
they held our hands or burned their bras,
somehow they silently grow into our poems
like gypsum, each one a different color and shape.

We credit them for our idiosyncrasies and diseases,
the likes of which haunt us the same way
their perfume covers everything.

I dare you to think of one pop song
written about old granny, one priceless
work of art reimagining her toothless smile.
Yes, we are sentimental fools,

but writers cringe from cliché,
and a grandmother poem is automatic death
unless she's Norma Rae.
I pray to you please honor her another way.

Find that tourmaline necklace she passed on,
and wear it for a change. Read her old love letters
to your son, bake her a cake, give your daughter
that god-awful name so popular way back when

she had to store away her feelings like rationed sugar
during that war she suffered through. I remember too
my sweet namesake unbraiding her long dark hair
in her tidy white bedroom. All she ever did

was suffer at the hands of a spoiled husband.
All she wanted was to die, and she passed
that on to me as well. What kind of writer
would I be if I hid that from you

and only wrote poems about her Christmas cookies
and that time she taught me how to crochet?

This entry was posted on Wednesday, October 4th, 2017 at 9:18 pm and is filed under [Poetry](#)

You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.