
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Florence Weinberger: Four Poems

Florence Weinberger · Tuesday, January 11th, 2022

Roped

I traveled to return with evidence. I hung a camera around my neck,
outing myself, an innocent intending to trust flutters at the edge of my vision.
I traveled to find something worthy of the trip, to a country rife with ruins.
Worth the film and the flash and the light itself, if I could take them all in,
cargo nets, carved wood canes that seemed ready to sprout if planted
or those ropes hanging from a beam, assorted breadths and lengths
like penises in the clubby showering after a ball game
but without the vigor and the curses; tans and blues and buffs,
an old man with a dingy beard and wet eyes standing next to them.
I must have gotten caught by the careless artifice of his handiwork,
and began snapping, seeking enough accretion to generate symmetry,
those strands that hold the gift-wrapped universe together,
my mother tying ropes around the cartons before the hired hands came
and moved us to another apartment where we got a month's free rent,
my patiently seething mother tugging hard to make sure the knots held
and after the movers left, unpacking and hanging everything up,
even the pictures, breaking down the cartons and dragging them downstairs
to the trash bins and saving the rope and having dinner on the table that night
when my father got home from work.

*

Prescription: Magnetic Resonance Imaging

A dominatrix in a white jacket straps me onto a narrow cot
and slides me through like a corpse on the way to cremation.

I'm being chastened by my spine, curving like a scimitar
while my attention swerved from spike heels to vigorous sex,
battered bones, slipping discs.

The skull pounding begins with the fervor of Midwest
factories grinding out gears, gadgets and girders. Ear plugs
useless as shoes on a snail,

I'm jittered from inches of silence to cycles of clatter that
jazz me to panic. Breathe in, breathe out, breathe
into arrhythmic symphonies, bone-shaking caesuras—

cacophonies of bongs and bells jimmied into the space
between pain and pianoforte as the hour drags on and on
like Ferde Grofé's ambling donkey, eternal and fitful.

Oh, cosmic creator who cobbled us bodies of grumble and will,
what hath you wrought? I rise humbled,
remove the plugs from my ears, and the babble goes on:

The body is damaged, it's beyond repair.

The body is redeemable, and we have a cure.

*

Issue of Otherwise

On a crystal morning
 across waters stippled with sun

a freighter on the distant sea line
 makes its slow way south

and at some nautical stride in its wake
 a person is walking on water.

Its silhouette defines the horizon
 the way Chinese calligraphy hardens a thought.

I stare through the smoky topaz of sunglasses.
 Take them off, so I can see through just air.

Stiff as a flagpole, a person walking on water.
 A cargo vessel inching its way, the figure

follows faithfully, a pace so unhurried,
 it gives my senses coda enough

to sober me. A ship is pulling a tall object
 behind it. I want to be clear. At no time do I believe

I am seeing a person walking on water,
 yet the prospect cautions me.

*

Some of my Friends Are Crazy

Some of my friends are crazy.

I say that with gratitude.
I am not afraid they will gather knives.
I say that without conviction.

I have a tendency to go with my gut, and I've gotten sold out;
mostly, I've been lucky. I understand the enchantment
of their madness,
and though they may not love themselves,
I can get romantic. I can forget to keep a distance.

Sometimes, when I get a whiff of derangement,
I will sacrifice my reticence

and I will move closer to the quirky narrative of lives
that teach me some love needs to fly higher than God
to escape its barbed-wire fences.

(Read more poems from Florence Weinberger; Photo credit: Alexis Rhone Fancher)

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