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# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Jennifer Bradpiece: Three Poems

Jennifer Bradpiece · Wednesday, September 16th, 2020

### Lullaby for Children

I envy them too much  
to have one.

Their infinite mouths,  
mad things  
uttering syllables detached  
from discernible meaning.

The unprovoked screams  
in crowded restaurants.

The inconsolable moan  
at improbable altitudes in planes.

The things they do with food  
when tiny green peas inspire  
performance art instead of appetite.

I am still confused by the electric  
fuse of life  
pulsing through my own veins.  
Too confounded to expand the cord  
of my flesh into the blood and breath of another.

I rearrange the clutter inside  
my own crowded room,  
alphabetize my insomnia, press  
my compulsions neatly on the floral slab,  
needlepoint my neurosis into cushions.

In this asylum, only room for one.

\*

## Lullaby for Ovaries

The women are falling under sterile silver waves,  
knives cutting out dangerous pearls.  
Pearls carved by time cresting:  
two decades, the wave falls  
three decades under, four decades, five.

Women who cast words out on water,  
paint on its oiled surface,  
weave music from the air above sea,  
adorn skins in shimmering scales of their own fashioning.  
Women who create bodies of work rather than bodies within.

The doctors, those unimaginative navigators  
of our vessels, ask “why?” and “when?”  
Seeking to plant mermaids into gardens  
like little Eves to seed  
and split shoots that might save them,  
yet anchor them into someone else’s sands.

Now, I have harvested something foreign.  
Been summoned to stand on  
their diagnostic dock. They want me  
un-perfumed, stripped bare, my upper half turned,  
breasts pressed between cold plastic,  
two bookends  
that might tell the end of the story between them.

\*

## Lullaby for a Species

The humans had a strange run.  
They always thought  
they were talking to each other.

They licked their fingers to paper  
and folded up their hearts,  
but stuffed them into sock drawers.

Paper cut deeper  
than daggers  
until the keyboard—

the tap-tap of resonant notes,

of dissonant notes.

They used them to strike,

but could not hear the music.

They signed their souls to Truth,

but seldom knew honesty.

Desperate to be heard,

they forgot

how to listen.

Now every window

lights an author,

audience dissolving.

Obsessed with finding

themselves,

each hallway grew mirrors.

*(Featured photo by Alexis Rhone Fancher)*

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