

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Kathryn deLancellotti: Three Poems

Kathryn de Lancellotti · Wednesday, October 24th, 2018

### Farewell to Jezebel: Eaten by Dogs

*after a 19th-century painting by John Liston Byam Shaw, "Jezebel, Queen of Israel"*

Whoever wrote the bible wanted you remembered  
as the Whore of Israel.  
They must have hated you, or something you knew,  
or possessed, to give you that title.  
You aren't a fighter like Deborah or devoted  
like Miriam or nameless like Potiphar's wife.  
You didn't steal strength with a haircut,  
or bathe naked on a rooftop, or laugh at God.  
Each time you spread your legs  
you knew exactly what you were doing.  
You've known since the first finger,  
the first fist, all the fissures  
and tarring and tears. The king's dead,  
they killed your son, too.  
You're not going to hide, are you?  
You're going to stare out that window  
and take it. You don't even care  
what they do with your name,  
or with the body, you've already left.  
You wanted to be remembered with a pink rose  
in your red hair, eyes lined with coal.

\*

### These Walls

One day these walls will become  
too full and fall to the floor  
like the tick that drank its belly red  
and dropped from the dog's ear.

There are invisible webs in every corner  
 I would have never seen  
 if not for the black hairs caught  
 like flies to poison.  
 I placed my ear to the wall, bees hummed  
 beneath layers of wallpaper, decades  
 smoothed over with floral and textures.  
 When the exterminator smoked the hive,  
 it fled through the chimney—  
 an angry cloud over Wagon Wheel Blvd.  
 The milk, the honey, chamomile, Xanax, weed.  
 I tried everything. My doctor said,  
*if you can't sleep, clean.*  
 I did not take his advice.  
 Instead, I lie in bed awake and listen  
 to my son's breathing.  
 To owl song and cat fight.  
 I drift with the night blooming jasmine  
 into half-dream—  
 frantically eating my way out  
 of silk and night, with no choice  
 but wings  
 and piercing light.

\*

## Not To the Father Will I Give Myself

*for Robert Bly*

Not to confessionals, nor banks, nor country.  
 I will not drop bombs, Sir, will not build walls.  
 No longer will I give myself to bearded musicians,  
  
 nor salty surfers. Cold showers, instead.  
 I will not treat Earth the way you treat the feminine.  
 Will not pour oil into oceans, starve the sacred  
  
 polar bear, nor steal ivory from an elephant's face.  
 It's true, Officer, I told my toddler not to trust you,  
 that you're like a dog off leash. Leaders of War,  
  
 of Money, of pussy grabbing, you may not kiss me,  
 Nor choose for me. And Mr. Vice, step out,  
 it's beautiful to be gay.  
  
 I don't pray to Archangel Michael, anymore.  
 I pray to the Mother, to Mary, and to the other Mary.  
 Dare I say her name? Washed his feet with her hair—

Saint Magdalene, teach us to love our clits, again.  
Teach us multiple orgasm. No more faking, ladies.  
Teach us to say, no, I don't want to have sex with you,

don't want to make your bed. Go ahead, call me a whore.  
You've been hurt, too, little brother,  
told to take off your sunflower dress.

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