

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Lani Scozzari: “Sheath, Erosion”

Lani Scozzari · Saturday, September 3rd, 2022

Sheath, Erosion~~

In the weeks after my husband of 14 years told me he was having an affair with my childhood best friend

I.

In the fevered throws of night
our power went out. The first

of the storm surges, a frazzle of rain
barely spritzing in the blundery gusts.

I wanted to stay in our home. But he
insisted we leave for a friend’s whose

home was served with a full house
generator. I’d been up all night

praying for reprieve, the stomach flu
ravaging my already worn body. I listened

and crawled my way to the car while both
girls out of bed, he packed some clothes

threw all our freezer and refrigerated
foods into a cooler. We drove across town

just before the curfew of evacuation,
traffic lights downed, hardly any rain.

What they never know, threatens
and fear rises in the air, a silence

without bird flight or song, without
knowing.

II.

It goes like this

nothing

is worth believing. What holds us
not husband we absolve

all fear into, no, impact glass still
shatters with enough ammunition

marriage: a made thing, materialized
blown glass. Years ago, in Boston

on his way home from classes
he came across a glass blower

and bought 6 spheres of melded
color, swirled bubbled each one exactly

different than the other, he arrived
home, all of them intact but his

backpack and coat were covered
in bird poop. We still have

everyone of those glass globes,
their fragility is nothing compared

to marriage, thin nibbled, crystalized
frost. There is nothing outside to protect me.

III.

Once last year I felt
alone standing on a cliff's edge,

I was the zero
of zero, the negative reciprocal,

hollowed between
bowels and marrow. Without.

What would I write if I could
be alone. Within these five lines:

a blistered mouth, pout of feelings,
lost underwear, news blurb, coconut oil,

split lip, unbrushed teeth, lost pajamas,
too late past, flailing arms, want

of children, ache of home, electrocuted
tongue, tonight is the eve of my 14th

wedding anniversary. I would do it
again. The bromeliad scorched

in the direct sun exposure, its spine
sharped, leaves bleached in silence,
spiked edges visible only in the light.

IV.

In the process, the skin
sheds, in sheaths, as if burning

could do such a thing, from within
the cell itself, mitochondria sizzle

transpiration impossible, membrane
eradicated. I remember pain. Clustered

blood, seizes up—cease flow. Does no one
know love as I do? Why I didn't believe

an undoing of love? From under the roar
of a green and wanting sea, we dodged breaks

of waves, in the tilt of current, crested white
I held my breath, let the ocean overturn me,

legs upright, head down, how does a fetus
resolve direction? Today is the wedding

anniversary, reckoning lost with gratitude
what other choice do we have but to forgive?

V.

There may be some bleeding
some fragments. What organ

burst with nothing left to repair, only
the escape of tissue. Elastic—return

settle back. Cavitation. Swath. I hid

under my desk after school, the halls
quieted in evacuation of life. All of this

for a boy. When we met I needed someone
to love me, to teach me to love

barely a year out of treatment
for an eating disorder. I wanted

nothing less than marriage. Equivalent

rain, chatter of squirrels, cawing
bluejays, even the crows took from us.

VI.

Little skim of algae
green lifed glow

surface tension holding
almost—as if—

it were really true
tiptoe across, rippled

sink through: becomes sludge,
thick muck, warranted bottom

slime estuary. Snapping turtles
bite the air at what isn't there

but they can see. What else
is there that I don't not know...

always some undercurrent
indirect pulling. When the wind

clocks north sometimes the current
pushes south, the swirl of tide incoming,

crystalized water meeting brackish
meeting fresh. When I said *I'd die without him*—

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