
Cultural Daily

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Laurinda Lind: “Elsewhere Meanwhile”

Laurinda Lind · Saturday, November 6th, 2021

Laurinda Lind, “Elsewhere Meanwhile,” 2021 Jack Grapes Poetry Prize Finalist selected by Judge Mariano Zaro

In this poem the characters are real, complex. The poet brings the reader into the core of family dynamics with a narrative language full of velocity and truth.

— Mariano Zaro

Elsewhere Meanwhile

The American Hindu monk I interviewed for a little newspaper in a tiny town said Ramakrishna’s throat cancer shouldn’t scare me, it’s not that meditation makes you sick, it’s that life means suffering. I think of my mother’s father in his single bed at the back of our house when I was twelve while he called mama, mama, out of his head with emphysema. Of my father with his big dry tongue trying to ask where was he, in the last hospital that would have him when they quit feeding him so he would die faster. This is called *comfort care*. I wish all I knew was this, that Ramakrishna at six was so in love with the saints he was drunk on them, or my grandfather alive at the same frequency as animals so they sought him out, even in zoos, even a boa loose in a store creeping along a counter to rub its big face against his. Or my father who, in the silence

before it started to ring, used to say, “Answer the phone,” and knew complicated math answers before he even wrote the work to prove he was right. And everyday miracles that seem too minor to mention but suggest a great joy we see only occasionally since we are so exhausted inside ourselves. But my mother’s mother’s sailor father ended up senile ripping his sheets to caulk the leak he himself had made in the boat of his bed, and my mother’s mother sailed off that way too, out to sea in her psyche, hardened arteries held together by her good cooking. Her daughter, my mother at ninety-one, never knows where she is or almost anything, so what about me near the end of them, won’t I start spinning in circles kept round by their constant repetition as soon as today, sloughing off all I have to do for some room undetectable by ordinary reason— maybe raving like an actor playing Lear, but probably just waiting for a dark full enough that it’s safe to fall into it.

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