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# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Martina Reisz Newberry: Three Poems

Martina Reisz Newberry · Wednesday, July 29th, 2020

### SUBSEQUENCE

*I have brought you here so you will know forever/The silences which are our beginnings*

~Eaven Boland

Look here, my years don't  
make of me a footnote,  
not a semi-mystic, not an  
elder "woman poet,"  
nor am I a poetESS.  
ESS indeed...  
ESS does not fit the  
largeness of my anger,  
the uncomfortable clarity  
of my voice.  
ESSes do not strafe your eyes  
with a battery of code words  
for passion. ESSes are not  
breathing walking  
cauldrons of love, drive and death;  
they are not incendiary, fierce,  
judiciously choosing life—no matter  
how ruinous, how terrifying—rather  
than a marshmallow death  
strung out over years  
seated pleasantly and unseen  
on a cushion.  
Listen up! Keep your ESSes.  
My years are no  
indication of the violence  
to which I've testified,  
the wars I've detested,  
the poverty and ineligibility  
I've fought unsuccessfully.

I am not become unbeautiful  
 or anonymous or resigned  
 because of my 70-plus years  
 around the sun.  
 I began in silence  
 (similar to ESS, no?)  
 as too many of us do,  
 but have not stayed there  
 and I won't return there.  
 That/those which/who have given  
 me cause to regret have only done  
 that one little thing.  
 They have not killed me.  
 If there is killing to be done,  
 I will do it. Try me out,  
 read what I say.  
 If I bleed, do not doubt it,  
 you will drown.

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## ME AND AMY LOWELL

*U.S. Officially Enters War With Yemen*  
 — Headline from Common Dreams News 10/14/2016

Again we make living beings  
 into silage—less than silage really—ash.  
 Again our young soldiers  
 polish the boots of senators and  
 congressmen with blown-to-bits  
 rags of robes, dresses, trousers, diapers.

Ours is now the land from which  
 nothing is born. We cannot sing  
 of sunflowers if they've all been  
 deflowered, devoured by scorpions.  
 The Good suffer an affliction  
 of the spirit, the Wicked suffer nothing.

Once, we were our own talismans.  
 Once we flung our jackets over our shoulders,  
 boarded home-going trains with  
 confidence in our home-grown courage.  
 Once I wanted to be Amy Lowell  
*...all tremulous with hope and wistful joy*

*for something that is sure to come at last...*

*cradling the future in a glorious past.\**  
 Now I look through chaos for someone  
 to quote and/or Be. I've outlived  
 the sleight-of-hand, the constant gestures,  
 the backstreet bullying from a psychopath

empire disguising itself as America.  
 In the end, our Ms. Lowell was right.  
 We have all lost too often, too much,  
 too many, *in a pattern called war.*  
 The ugly query stands:  
*Christ! What are patterns for?*

(Italicized quotes are from Amy Lowell's poem *Patterns*, first published in a monthly magazine called "The Little Review" in August 1915.)

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## BY AND LARGE

The sun is faithful, tries to recall  
 why it cannot bleach out terror from  
 the planet. Every day it stands tall,  
 confident that THIS will be the day  
 all squalor burns off the earth after  
 dewpoint. Poor sun... the minutes proceed,  
 the hours jet by, and though the light on  
 water is fine and bright, though shadows  
 chase each other among the sunlit  
 trees, so little changes. There is some  
 reparation when shards of sun warm a  
 shivering dog or heat the sidewalk  
 under a homeless citizen. Still,  
 by and large (as my dad used to say),  
 very little changes. At 5 pm,  
 the sun speaks. *Sorry, it says, failure .*  
*is mine. I'll try again tomorrow.*  
*Please understand the implications*  
*of my strife, all the implications*  
*of my struggle, are in the stars. Stay*  
*where you are. Stay tuned. I may return.*

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