

THE VALLEY OF QUEENS

Polly

Better that my daughter forget
her weakest rabbit, one I loved
the most, white runt Polly

born lame, her red eyes
the spitting image of rabid;
and kept away from our cat,

penned inside our zoo --
warmest upstairs room --
which might've been filled with

a baby crib, rocker,
and a table for all those changes
of onesies, had I ever wanted

to have another baby, but no,
never did want
to risk
playing favorites. And better that

my little girl was sleeping
that evening Polly shriveled
like a flawed corsage

on the carpet, between my knees,
on my lap her rear leg ceasing
to twitch: first of twenty limbs

to wither. First rabbit to die,
just shy of those four equal
survivors, my sturdy orphans.

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To the Motionless One in Egypt

Pup, will you lift your dry head, open dusty eyelids
if I slap you hard on your ribs, tug at your right ear,
force open your jaws with the rim of my bottle,

will you rise on front paws if I flee my tour, leap
into this pit of crumbling columns, only shade for miles
you might perish in -- or the other strays pant in --

which parchment was once your milking mother?
Pup, are you sinking through Valley of the Queens
or sailing to Ra, or will you rouse soon as I've gone

back to the bus, through tinted windows glimpsing
your resurrection but forbidden -- ever -- to touch
the miracle, to rest my hand on your salting belly.

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Pistol Squat

Fuck any aim of Zen
humility.

I do squats as means
of combat, BMI
held to 20.

Right knee bent, left leg deployed
like the barrel of a
handgun.

Ankle cocked & hard core
burning down
inch by
inch.

Target: the toe:
Fix it.

three two one
Fire.

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The Old Stylist

She soothes by comb, making it all better,
she wants to make hairs happy once
again, as they were before neglect --
my cheap shampoo, steely bristles --

and she wants to move to a city warm
with tropical reds & mauves & yellows,
new textures she can improve upon
every eight weeks, or six

and she doesn't want the water spray too hot
on my head or the dryer helmet too close
or the cut too short, or highlights too bright
for my grey eyes, she wants to retire

after a few more years of this, squeezing perfect
tablespoons of perm gel, rescuing roots,
coating every gal in her chair with bliss: the do
will be so much easier going forward.

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**With Lines from All My Diaries
Since the Millennium**

She rehearses the words of Zeus, aloud,
waiting in bed
for breakfast.

Mistletoe is a veiled parasite,
and my party mask is the back
of a round mirror.

Of the pumpkin
she takes 50 photos, then says to me,
you're too overflowing.

My husband's mother (God help her)
put Superglue in the corner
of a false eyelash.

2010 was the best year of my life:
I almost had Asperger's. Until
my doctors agreed: *you don't have Asperger's.*

Loud, soft, loud, soft: patterns
I snore in. He groans in.

"Singers Wanted"
pleads a bumper sticker;
"Sonnet"
declaims a license plate.

Did you know that some tornadoes
can swirl invisible?