

Crouching Platypus

“Welcome to Route 54
Service to Strawberry Mansion,”
Blurts the bus
To black pipes
On a semi from Des Moines, Iowa
Sixteen wheels winding right
In front of Trinidad Flat Fix:
Lavender shop-front facing Frankford
And Somerset with fortitude-
silver rims reckoning
In reticent rows,
Sharing shelves with weathered windows,
Glaring at rusted round steel drums-
Rocking complacent sighs at their resolve
As remnants.

A crunchy plastic bag bounds before
The wandering woman with lips sucked,
Tucked inside her face, frowning on a head-
Holding heroically the Royal Purple perched protrusion.
This hat heals her heart
But has no advice for her hapless red, black, checkered flannel man-shirt.

She wonders why the worker in short-sleeves
With the long-handle dust-pan
Struggles with a broom-
Squashed yellow bristles crunched
In battle for a leaf, or a smashed can,
Or a cluster-wad of cardboard
On a day so windy
The green weeds growing out of rocks
Behind the barbed wire-
Twisty-ties every six inches,
Do backbends before the cement wafer-wall’s
Intestinal crusty brick,
Exposed in the shape of a crouching platypus.

"Imani's Yellow Gingham Dress"

Dauida sits on concrete steps in
New fresh tight blue jeans
Yanking out some young boy's braids
Who's just turned in his teens.

Nzingha's rocking back and forth
On Daddy's orange chair.

And Daddy's yelling from the hall
"Go clean up all that hair!"

Elijah moves in silence slinking
Through the hanging beads
Now Clacking clicking
On the cat named Kudo who he feeds.

But Vida just sits proudly
On her step without a care.
Daddy's doing business now
And standing on the stair.

Ginelle comes in with slouching sweatsocks
Laughs and grabs the phone
In Camden are the Kirklands
And some
body's always home.

Circulating spirits pause perusing
Silentness: Imani's standing
Sternly in her
yellow gingham dress.

A safety pin soon sojourns
At her shoulder's sagging strap
And Mani's got a mini-turtle
Crawling on her lap.

"Daddy makes us eat just rice here-
Every single NIGHT,"

She throws her hands up to her face
And shields her eyes of sight.

"I be gettin' SICK of rice,"
She pouts and rolls her eyes

"He be cookin' it and sayin'
'Mani-look. Surprise!"

The paper mill pulp pulses
Pinkish-fog flung of duress

Imani flings a dripping braid
From off her gingham dress.

The Dawn Horse

On lichen rocks did Dawn Horse roam
through Wasatch Mountain rain

 drops trot
on flea-market folding tables.
"Mark it- brass horse five dollars.
For you? Four twenty five."
Gold mane draping. Arched neck of
Eohippus- the gypsies lost monkey.
Brass saddle bends. Stirruped patina.

Grandpop dies. I am twenty nine.

I cannot bridle your death.

Filadelfia

406 homicidios
And counting.

Corpse- Daddy, brother, lover?
Lying beside presort US postage paid
Phila PA tag
On "El Comercial,"
Enero Del 2007

Denim jeans
Brown hands
Peach fingernails flexed
Four fingers crossed-
On salvation symbol.

Did you talk with Jesus?
Did he see you when the bullet bashed?

Who picked up your hands, hardened
For the display? For your last day?

Red rose rises,
Peddles peace morsel
from your pocket.

La abuela mourns on
Dirt crumbles sealing your solitude
Into one reticent hole.

Plush white casket closed
Beside black type-face:
"Fiesta de Bodequeros y
Moncioneros."

Red white and blue flag frames the
Front-page pain.

Free.
On the wobbly plastic newsstand
In the foyer
With the roaches.

Your body rests under the bold face:

Celulas Madres
A partir del
Fluido amniotico
-pag.4

The vertical title tethers
To his black hair
In block letters
Lingering in curious juxtaposition.

Scourge of the sirens:
Arcade orgasm wails
Amplified like a poisoned Pac-Man
In a distorted cosmos
After the first snow

Todo me parece un sueno.