

Mouth Noise

There are people who
never should learn to talk
who say nothing
with too many words
and sentences with no question marks
the noise of their throat
superseding thoughts
leaving no time for consideration
of what comes streaming into the air
an ill conceived cacophony of verbiage
with no space for response
no dialog
or conversation possible
only mono download
nonsense
or annoying social media facts
and uninformed opinions
replacing ideas
that might offer questions
and the potential to learn
leaving no room for breath
or listening
and no space to hear...

If given an opening I would say:

"Shhhhh!

Be quiet,

say nothing;

go inward --

there,

you will see

a chamber

of carnival

mirrors."

Seeking Asylum

from persona

flight or stillness
chin up or cheek turned
walk alone or hold a hand

in solitary confinement

bleeding from a thousand cuts
questioning fickle deities
I unfold tissue paper wings

eyes feeble in shadows

I release all shields
a stream of pearls
glimmers

prowling for words

the redemptive inheritance
initials
carved in bark

I was here

THE ARTIST

a butterfly of tian and yellow
 imprinted on the back of her neck
framed by
 gold hair cut short
at twenty she painted walls of her dreams
 sleeping with her palette under the stars
danced with her brushes
 wiping the air with pigment
sang like the wind
 through fields of wheat
flew from the arms
 of lovers like a feral bird

at thirty she was captured
 a Monarch pinned in a shadowbox
her art smeared with dominance
 control confused with love
she bore purple
 on her cheeks
hid blue
 under her sleeves
she disappeared
 like a sunset in a storm

by fifty she had lost her paints
 caged alone in a single-wide
her eyes bereft of color
 shaded by white hair
voice arid
 like a dusty corral
her soul no longer
 trembling for flight
the butterfly dissolved
 into the crepe of her skin

Ellen Read My Poem and Wept

She said it resonates with all she feels.

I am gratified she liked it.

We wept together with words
a bouquet of sympathy.

We are not alone in dismay.

Life is unfair.

Closing our eyes will not blind us

to poisoned skies,

senseless murders,

police in schools,

ear in churches,

gender bias,

clueless leaders

and greed that reigns the world.

Ellen's mother died. Mine has died too.

We can't escape loss and loneliness
and our own old age.

Ellen and I wept.

We want to hold hands

but touching is out of reach.

So we exchange words

in the language of pain,

listen to birds in the sunrise,

stroke our cat's becalming fur,

cook a bowl of rice and broccoli

and breathe in the steam

like a prayer of gratitude.

ODE TO MY GLASSES

sculpted glass worn
on the bridge of my nose
helps me see far
helps me see close

I cannot see clearly
without this prop
the world's an impression
like Georges Seurat's thought

words on a page
vibrate with no detail
I feel so confused
and can't read the mail

I started with glasses
around age forty-five
the glasses get stronger
the longer I'm alive

my Dad wore spectacles
after The War
only taking them off
when his nose got sore

sometimes I sit
and take my glasses off
I close my eyes
feel my belly go soft

without my glasses
I see deep and go far
I see my torn heart
and each healed scar

I see my child
who lives far away
my thoughts will wander
to what I would say

I see giving and forgiving
no future or past
I see only love
and know that will last

I replace my frames
I am grateful and now
will always see clearer
this I do vow