

NEW POEM SUITE

The Kuyker House

At the end of the first stretch of Adeline Street,
where the houses shade from
old and stately to
old and worn out,
Where the long leaf pines begin
to overtake the live oaks
with wisps of Mississippi moss,
sits a white structure with a red tiled roof,
Spanish Mission, distinguished yet dowdy,
to us kids always the Kuyker House-- somehow
it made our blood run cold.

No clear reason why this should have been,
except the Kuykers were believed
to be old, unmarried siblings,
had always lived there,
and, we were sure,
it was also full of cats.

Only two Kuykers were ever seen
outside the place:
there was Fanny, frizzled red hair
old, we thought, at least 50,
Not that she weeded the garden or fed
those felines *on the* crumbling front steps, no

Fanny, when I saw her,
was simply studying then lettuce or
cucumbers at Delchamps
just like anybody,

or quietly waiting in line at Woolworth's,
and, if I was right behind her,
smelling faintly of cat.

I would sometimes see her,
with an ancient woman, silent
dressed all in black, eyes vacant, terrifying.
Yes maybe her mother or aunt,
but somehow out of place looking mournful and Italian
more than 'Mississippi.'

Rumor had it that the family,
behinds those old stucco walls
were all odd like that. And,
Rounding the corner on my bike,
tossing the Hattiesburg American
into yards, but not theirs,
a wet yellow October leaf
floating down
to a carpet of pinestraw,
I felt proud sometimes
that the dull drowsy block
was blessed by
this house of ghosts.

ADAM LANZA OF NEWTOWN EXPLAINS

I meant to do it.

I don't want anybody to blame my mother.

I wasn't—like- on the best of terms with my father, but

I don't want to pass any responsibility to him, either.

I mean look at that stupid picture they published of me

after my so-called “rampage”

look at my eyes, like some Byzantine mosaic deer in the headlights

junior saint. A saint I was not,

but not a monster either—though close. It was not so fun

shooting those kids, more than one looking me in the eye in panic

but it had to be done. I planned it, dreamed it, strapped three automatic weapons

to my commando-assed self and drove to that school I'd attended.

Then I was this weird-happy kid there, so it was not fun to see

these little me's crumple to the classroom floors, *one* after the other, after the other.

Some were under desks, some crying but not most, it was all too quick,

and those teachers, what the fucking hell was wrong with me?

I was angry, I was cold, I was in some zone.

You know-- it's the random-small things.

The surge of power as my finger squeezed

the Bushmaster XM-15 from Mom's gun-closet,

the home schooling science sessions with my dad,

my hikes on the beach as a kid with him and my brother,

the civil arguments my folks had on the phone

about where to go next with my therapy.

The damned clip for reloading my rifle jammed

as I finished with one classroom and maneuvered

toward the one across the hall. I was not on autopilot, I wanted to kill more.

Flash- thoughts of my older brother after this mess,

my mom at home in bed with four bullets in her head,

the glass front door of the school exploding as I shot my way inside.

And then I heard police car sirens, and whimpers from some closet, the beach, something was going wrong, my wrecked computer at home,

better to veer down the hall, No! Better to pull out my Glock 20,

sniff the sweet varnish of the hallway, bend my head down,

press steel into the back of my neck

and blow out the lights.

What If the Moon What if the moon just disappeared?

—vanished

Not from Shakespeare or the Bible

or the ship captains' logs,

But now—or last night

cloudless, purple

lit with tiny stars, as if

we expected the gibbous light

of the night before

No, we were not dreaming,

the December woods were bathed in soft silver

as we climbed, crunched the familiar icy path.

But tonight the moon was not there

Venus, Sirius and the other turned on

as the sun left and

what did the Icelandic fishermen think,

expecting a bit of help from the sky?

Indonesian women leaving their looms to breathe green air

outside the stifling mills?

Vermont villagers coming out of

each other's shops, pubs,

looking up, puzzled about something,

And the oceans crashed confused,

the tides shimmered, stilled

off Chile and Tasmania,

Barcelona and Cape Cod.

Everywhere.

Two Latvian Summers

Last summer in Riga you bought me

Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*

well of course an illustrated *book* about it.

You did and we took it to Pilsrundale in the July heat,

you driving across the bridge over the Lielupe-- all green and reedy--

muttering "*shausmigs*" and "*Yay-zus!*" at offending trucks,

We passed the Palace where you used to work so many years. Rundale

rising, an Eighteenth Century Oz from fields of green flax, red poppies

so improbable, so like the Hermitage—same architect, Rastrelli,

so everyday for you, you rode your bicycle there in 5 minutes,

to gild chandeliers and touch Corinthian corners with silver, before

The Crash and wages for palace artisans, with it.

You, crazy like a fox,

refused to be a wage slave in a Banker's Depression

so went free lance, gilding alters as an Angel of Mercy

for small Latvian churches, designated National Treasures

sometimes feeling you

were without 2 centime coins to rub against each other

I dream of you, a little girl

chestnut hair blowing wild in the wind

running through sunflowers bending

in the gusts,

Sky; blue, cloudless Blue-- a great

Bowl over flat tawny groundscape,

Big brothers Ancis and Juris bending over
rows of strawberries, picking
the best ones while your
father Edmonds, home for lunch
half ignores Khrushchev on the radio
eating his *biezputra* porridge,
the town newspaper folded
and read held by an out stretched arm.
Maybe a shot of Stolichnaya will
appear later in the June afternoon—
not just yet,

You would write grants
and host one crazy American that has
dined with your family for seven years.
We don't seem to know quite what to do with each other.
I celebrate you with this little trip, my eighth to the Baltics
and you me with this book of Bosch details,
Eden couples cavorting in bubbles blown by giant black daisies
Can it all be any stranger than the Ukrainian red pepper schnapps we share?

KAIROS CHOIR CONCERT: Mother's Day, 2013

Kairos (καιρός) is an [ancient Greek](#) word meaning the right or opportune moment (the supreme moment).

It was about springlight, a historic church, memory, and treason
Familiar faces, an audience intent before a choir singing
Early Music for this day of Ave Maria's and *a capella*

Kairos madrigaled and chanted before us, , my wife and
good friends, clerics of the church, in the church, St George's
where they preached once, with the crystal chandelier right above

Us as we set under the prism of May's sun light
through Tiffany stained glass martyrs' windows of
light and song-- combined, conspired, hypnotized,

The river wind blessed the seated congregation
warmed with radiant energy radiant
song and sitting there studying each singer

One soprano at the extreme left, her
Voice reaching softly high above the rest
Stopped my heart, she

was so intent, so much younger than
the rest and I caught her eyes, she mine
an instant only, to be released for soaring song,

Medieval and I saw in her, Madonna but more
 an apparition, my young wife Katy, another wife--
 earlier, 1977, *Katy who fled*, leaving

Desolation, then, but no more, now only
 beauty, chansons in front of the alter
 this man falling in love yet again holding

the hand of the gentle wife-of-now, but so, So in love with
 this chanteuse of *Bonjour Mon Coeur* and he
 stunned by the sweet minute's infidelity,
 '*Fidelis*'

Came the swell of polyphony,
 a poor historian, captive to this living singing saint,
 congregant once of this consecrated place where
 his daughters lit candles, fresh robed acolytes for
 morning services and song and then
 those twenty Mays ago,

danced in the green wind outside this very
 church, the front courtyard converted to
 a Sunday strawberry festival, like

some little Fifteenth Century whimsy
 but with cars parked on the street
 as they are today for this

impossible conflation

blameless deception,

Kairos amens again in perfect harmony.