

Heresy Number One and Four Other Poems

Heresy Number One

If she was anything like me
I can't see Eve being formed
from some guy's rib.
How do you get the high cheekbones,
the strong jaw,
the shifting power of the pelvis
from a puny rib?
To say nothing of the soft tissues,
the skeptical eyes,
that encompassing heart --
All that from one of Adam's skinny little ribs?
My ass!
(like hers, I'd wager)
is more substantial
and sways to its own rhythm.

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Quest

Darkness at the edge of woods
gives way within
to dappled light
that shifts with wind
and beckons
lures me in.

Past poison ivy
lyme-filled ticks
I clamber over
fallen trunks,
trip on vine-hid rotting wood
drawn to a clearing
strewn with lichened rock
watch for snakes
those priestesses attending
ancient gods
find none upon this bouldered mass.

Wind is rattling
autumn breath
as chariot of cloud
draws cross the sky
while back through rashy
itchy
wilderness
I climb
bearing light.

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After the Fracture

Careful
careful
I plod each measured step
afraid of falling
searching for balance
stolidly awkward
hobbling
stiff
inflexible stance
until

one day
teetering
wiggling
rocking
bobbling
giggling
forgetting to try
I remember
how to dance.

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Time Travel with Ruth

More than forty years since we first met
almost thirty years since last we met;
now tucked into a corner table
way in the back of the restaurant
at the Philadelphia Museum of Art
– which we willfully ignore –
talking, talking, talking
catching up:
a bit about the men we met and married
nothing about the men we met and didn't
a bit of what we once believed career meant
nothing of what the job turned out to be
a smidgeon about the children
but more of labor
no longer a nightmare story, now full of laughs.

But mostly we talk of the times we shared together.

Weren't we unhappy freshman year of college!
And what was the first name of our landlord's wife –
the one we had to make the check out to –
Priscilla, or Cinderella?
Did the commune upstairs
live on more than one floor?
Remember the break-in, or, wait –
weren't there two?
And why did we move out of 76 Birch?
Remember that plumber who warned us, get out?
What kind of car did your boyfriend have?
Cadillac! Or Chevy?
And that guy with his yearbook picture nude,
kittens in his lap –
what was his name?

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And isn't it amazing we look so much the same as we did then?

But here's the shocker:

the photo we asked the waitress to take

turns out to feature two beaming

tastefully attired women, appearing –

how shall I say it? –

somewhat mature!

Some jokester played a prank on us, I'm sure.

You and I are ageless.

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Dry Spell

I don't believe my muse has deserted me
quite the contrary

I suspect she is busy organizing a closet
stumbling on a wrinkled, twisted
brown leather pump
smoothing a red print blouse with a white bib front
adjusting the angle of a long forgotten
black felt cloche
wiggling into a shocking pink bathing suit

I imagine she's melding
discarded identities
creating from old styles
compelling new ones
sifting through what once was
until she finds
a kernel of what always is

I expect she'll be back anytime now