

I Wonder if I am Writing to a Ghost

I wonder if I am writing to a ghost.

Like listening to Rubinstein
play Chopin and
Beethoven—
with fingers fresh
and newly prepared.
They are alive like the colors
of fish.

I sit down and play
Pathetique,
trying to avoid the 2nd movement.

Afterglow,
but it fades.
Everything fades...

Where are you?

I find myself
looking for your apparition.
I do not know if even
that exists.

It is maddening.

You have my eyes,
my longing.
Time has taken my mind.

It is maddening.

Ode to New Mexico

The Discovery of Heaven.
A discovery of Hell.
A purgatorio of sorts
and sorts, of sorts, of sorts.

"A la ve"

"A la machina"

"All've a hang sang-witch."

The woman at Walgreens tells me to have a *"Happy Valen-time's Day."*

Overheard, *"We're drown-ded."*

The response: *"A la, she said 'drown-ded!'"*

Another says *"Don't worry, she's Northern."*

What the fuck?

Yet here is where I met Rubinstein,
who introduced me to Verdi,
who's heroine slept with Liszt,
who's "Valse Oubliee" flows through my fingertips.

And the waltz is not forgotten.
For strangely, the stones of Vienna
and particulars of Russian conservatories
speak Italian and French, here.

Here. Miles and miles away,
far from a Rockin' Republic,
I hear my mother's voice saying
"You're from California, don't forget that."

And she's right.
Are we hiding? Or just reinvented?
This I ask my Catholic God and my Mahayana Universe
while sitting in the Cathedral, in my True Religions.

Alcohol, jail, food stamps,
Canyon Road, The Lensic, and Ten Thousand Waves
wash over and settle the anxieties
of the sorts, of sorts, of sorts, of sorts.

Yet here is my castle,
amongst mountains and dust.

This land of manana, where manana never comes.
Here, where we rest as aspens beneath the snow-melt.

This siren sings to give me your tired,
your hungry, your weak,
and I promise to smother you
in art, heroin, acupuncture treatments, and salves.

And after the sweet solace of my labors,
I will buy a bracelet
beneath her behemoth skies
to show to my envious friends in San Francisco.

My Poor Friend Mercutio Died on the Beach

My poor friend Mercutio died on the beach.
In a moment of madness or truth,
I shot and killed the man who killed him.
Exile! or cut my head off with a golden axe.

That day, I left a white counter—
up white carpeted stairs.
I followed his hand, leading me,
a short walk down the hallway.

No sound. A room with a balcony,
overlooking the scene of what a dream
once had to offer.

Stone tablets and government
would have my life
for stepping foot
in that space.

Take it. A head is a petite
price to pay.

My Throat is Cleanly Slit

My throat is cleanly slit.
I wait to empty,
and for consciousness to slip
smoothly into a warm bath.
But the bleeding persists,
spilling endlessly.
It's impractical for my corpse
to continue producing blood—
except it does.
A dream for Erszebet.

A Wine Glass Broke in My Sink Today

A wine glass broke in my sink today.
It was well tempered.
I wonder what it took
to compromise its structure.