

A MORNING AT THE BISTRO

Sometimes I forget I'm ugly.
It's when she walks in smiling
And says, "You ready?"
And I say, "I thtay weddy."
And she laughs and says,
"That's what I like about you."

And she helps me into the chair
And wheels me out of the room
And through the halls
And out the front door
And into the sunlight
And past the forsythia
And along the noisy street.

The people look at us, wondering.
And I smile, having such beauty
Over my shoulder
All the way to Mon Petit Chou
Where the waiter takes "Madam's" order,
Then asks, "And for your friend?"

She glares at Garçon
Then glances at me and says,
"Oh. Him? He's not my friend. Ask him."
And I struggle to stifle a laugh.
"I'll have a quithe Lowaine," I sputter.
"Quiche Lorraine? Sure," he repeats politely.

And when the waiter is gone
I look at her and say,
"That'th what I like about you."
And she smiles – mischievously.

HEM ca. 2020

GATECRASHER

It was something come by night
Intruding on my REM sleep.
I cannot name it, quite,
But now and then a bit will seep
Into the consciousness of day
Like brief movie trailer scenes
That are quickly gone away
Without revealing what it means
(What the movie means, I mean.)
 And so it is with dreams of you:
 Some brief thought will intervene
 Then vaporize and form anew
 Proposing fantasy as true.

HEM

ONE IN REVERIE GARDEN

A butterfly in the breeze bounces
Yellow against the cemetery green.
The dancing distraction lifts one's mourning weight
Of scarves and long coats and bowed heads.
And one finds oneself delighted without thinking
Until the wing alights for one beat
Revealing itself to be
Nothing
A scrap of scribbled paper.
Perhaps a Post-It Note tumbling.
How the spirit sinks at the sight of litter!
How secular for a sacred space!
One judges oneself for noticing
Such things
At such a time!
But one can't help
Wondering what is written.
A tribute to the dear departed?
Blown out of the parson's Bible?
Or maybe a secret confession.
A life-long heartache no one had taken time to hear.
The moment is too brief
To hold.
It flits away to be found by the gardener
And treasured or trashed.
How can one know?
 But one does wonder at it
 As much as at butterflies
 And death.

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SAYING LONELY

Loneliness is hard to verbalize
When you're not feeling it.
The words, though true, sound trite.
But when you in fact *are* lonely,
Who or what can inspirize
The vocabules to fit?
It is even more difficult to write
When you are one and only.

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THE GREEKS PROPOSE

The Greeks propose three loves or four
Involving body, soul, and mind.
But I have known a good deal more
And every one as undefined
As God's ineffable essence.

And I love you. And always will.
Such love requires no requite
To stay alive. But still
It hopes and hopes and hopes it might
Be known for its existence.

HEM 2021

A MOST MYSTERIOUS FORCE

All the boils on the collective human soul
Are being lanced.
The infection bursts forth with a putrid stench
That overwhelms the world.
Yet, there is a Nurse
Leaning over the tortured patient
To wipe away the poison
And apply the stinging poultice,
While, deep within, a most mysterious Force
Marshals for ultimate healing
Of sin-sick humanity.

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