

Mama, After the Stroke

“Remind me. I want to write this down.”

Leaning over the tin tray. Pen in hand.

Hand quivering over the pad.

“When you were a little girl

you met Brother Andre in Quebec.

You graduated from Hackensack High School.

There are seven grandchildren.

Ena is my daughter. She is two. Has your eyes.”

Mama smiles. Gathers her peach bathrobe with her left hand.

Tight against her neck. The veins bluge. Blue.

Head slumps to shadow.

The pen slides over the pad.

“Remind me. I want to write this down.”

I repeat the information.

Go Go Go

Out on the road again. Adventure.
Pretending reliving Kerouac and Cassidy
which really an aimless road trip
those days are in books Cliff's Notes read
instead bland suburban behind the wheel
on the speed limit, no go go go
but that was John Clellon Holmes
who never got a fair shake, stayed sorta sober and married
raised kids, well-liked by friends
August Darnell Endicott, wouldn't you be like him?
wrote drama instead of inflicting others with shit-disturbing
Kerouac is the drunk at the bar aping Wolfe then Celine, hemorrhage terminus
fingers slipping a can of tuna fish.
Cassidy is another whatever icon, dead railroad track.
and I am behind the wheel, on the road
I drop my daughter off at the mall
her meeting boyfriend for a movie
Endicott like John Clellon Holmes, no go go go.

The Mountain

I sense the hurting from within
passed from virtue adrift
painted painfully from dark indulgence
lost, yet again without foundation.

Yet again you forced all away
beyond the walls surrounding
is the reason for this
a fear indicative of what you face?

Looking frantically for a sign
trapped within your enclosure.
The walls another mountain you must climb.
Another year you must endure.

It is the mountain I look upon
from the perspective of memory
mine, not yours. Whatever regrets I have
I would never share with you.

Yes, your mountain, deluded fortress
your prison. Nothing to share in your silence
with allusion; I find reason to laugh
and difficulty to summon care.

Cold Monday on the Train

The bum on the train mutters, "It is cold."
It is.
The car is ill-heated. I pull my lapels tight.
"Too cold to write," he says.
"I do not have a typewriter. Or a computer."
I realize then he is speaking into a rolled-up scarf.
His wool cell phone.
He looks like Richard Brautigan.
The red cap at an angle. A black cloth bag
on his lap.
White hands fall to his sides. Clean.
Knuckles pulled back.
He falls asleep. Silver hair thick. Falls over shoulders.
When his fingers open
I see the scars. Purple pink fuschia.
Each knuckle bruised.
When my station is called I place his
knit cell phone on his lap.
He doesn't stir.
I leave.

After the End

Words never spoken
letters never sent
regrets never proffered
emotions never spent.

Unto exhaustion
relentless, bitter reality
brittle in its conception
a spoiled plan, coffee-stained
left abandoned on the table.

Sliding on the arc
of my personal history
from ambition to ruin
then rising with a cyclical turn
held in an angels' grasp
the fluttering of wings
a solitary feather falls.