

5 poems: submission to six-fold, October 14, 2014

1. *Now, You, See, It*
2. *Rug-wrapped Thought*
3. *Joe the Evening Thief*
4. *Eintou*
5. *The Story of Ferdinand the Bull*

Now, You, See, It

*On reading the article about Kalief Browder arrested on May 15, 2010
who spent more than a thousand days confined on Rikers Island.*

Now you see it,
an arc of silver winging by the 5th floor window
now you don't
face down, beaten on the way to the shower room

now see
what isn't your life but shocks
now don't
because it's too hard to believe in print

now it
swells to three years stolen
as excuses pile up:
2011, *people not ready, request one week.*
2012, *people not ready, request 2 weeks.*
Prosecutor assigned on trial elsewhere.
The assigned assistant on vacation

and it, in the first place never should have happened.

Now you, locust trees have turned gold for a wind shake-down.
You now shadows
the emptiness of this quiet street
imagining all of you who don't even know who it was
who it is
reading about a young boy tagged *it*

walking home that night, picked up for a crime
he did not commit with no you to protect.
It, see,
 could be you, now.
Now, you see?

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Rug-wrapped Thought

inspired by "Woman Reading a Letter" by Vermeer

I am glad she opened the window,
and like looking at her face
reflected in the quadrants of panes—
you would think a thick weave of rug
like me wouldn't care about such
things like sunlight slipping onto
promises penned in a letter, catching
a tassel or two of the curtain that matches
her dress. I don't like to be left in the dark.
As for this fruit spilling out on top of me,
I hope she eats it before it rots. She's already
tested the peach—opened it like a fortune
cookie... if he says this, I'll continue,
says that, I'll close him out, but what
difference does it really make? If she
doesn't watch out, she'll end up as an old
dried up pear, with me on her lap.
Is he the one she loves, or just the exit
part of an equation in this confined Dutch life
she leads in her fine gown. Like me, she is meant
to be seen, have audiences to admire her—
not be left in a dark corner of a room,
where no one knows the work that made me,
the brave travel, the accidental landing
in this family, given this place to wait...
but for what do any of us wait?

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Joe the Evening Thief

wraps a tail around a slender grape vine
to nibble dried sumac from the artful still life in the shop window.
The seed spills on golden stitches embroidered
on black cloth, as he gathers up another serving.
Do you blame him? Imagine the rumble of his hunger,
the windfall of this arrangement!
Aigrefin you might say — a trickster after his own ends,
filling his cheeks as the shopkeeper lets loose a torrent of French
escamoteur, cleptomane, malfrat. We observe,
see ourselves, voyeurs, mirrored back
as he steals the show.

Eintou

(syllabic form 2-4-6-8-6-4-2)

Questions
on what there is
unfinished pokes, day dreams
unfinished business: quantum leaps
who splits the pie: where, when?
on the what there
thinking

The Story of Ferdinand the Bull (on p. 3+4)

Anne on one knee, me on the other,
every night, your lap carried us,
your voice guiding us to discover worlds
between covers of books—like Ferdinand,
before we knew anything about Spain.
There was the magic of the cover...
the pink-wallpaper-flower designed cover,
with a scrawny bull showing a curvy tail,
munching a flower in a black spotlight
looking right out at us as if not a care in the world.
And then, you'd open the cover, and point

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(cont'd: 5. The Story of Ferdinand the Bull)

to the inside page of a 1936 Spanish street scene,
with boys running up cobblestones, and even
the angel on the church trumpeting excitement.
Another page, and the story starts with
Once upon a time, with a huge capital O
rolling towards tiny cows and bulls under a hill
where a fairytale castle points promises to the sky...
Your voice reassured us that just because Ferdinand
wasn't like the rest of the bunch, there was nothing
wrong with smelling the flowers. We knew Ferdinand's
mother didn't need to worry when he went out alone
by the way you said "an understanding mother",
pointing out her cowbell swinging along under her chin
like life itself. Of course we guessed you were just the same way.

And then came the part when Ferdinand had to enter
the bullring, and he looks soooo shy in the shadow
of the great door. But what we learned,
was that he had the courage to do
what no other bull would ever do.
Safe in the comfort of your lap
we learned more than the story.
We learned more than deciphering
the repeat of *smelling the flowers just quietly*.
We learned peace.

Now that I see you looking out
your picture window, I imagine you remembering,
just as we do, how Ferdinand taught us to take in
the fragrance of what's around us.

So now it's your turn to sit, and our time to tell you
how each word you shared is as fresh
as any of Ferdinand's flowers.