

Mea Culpa

The crime scene's violence
Is carefully concealed
From the surveyors' eyes.

That gallery's neglect
Is just what you'd expect
A torched, empty chamber's

Charred remnants to reflect,
If the antique affects
No longer left outlines –

Cleaner, white contours of
Their former vibrancy –
Etched into the lamplight.

The bright blood once pumping
Its rich, resonant pulse
From the lofty heart's song,

Decays in dull splatters,
Beyond analysis;
Your dirty secrets blend

Into the wallpaper's
Unassuming, peeling
Pattern of curios.

While your dark heart still bleeds,
A makeshift tourniquet,
Haphazardly applied,

Reinstates a white-washed,
Painted-on façade of
Habitability.

The curator moves in
Amongst this collection's
Chipped porcelain figures'

Unblinking, glass eyes. The
Switched-off lights ward away
Potential prospectors.

No footfalls crunch upon
The ice-ravaged gravel
Beneath this path gone cold.

Wabberjocky

~Or~

What Wonders Lie Around the Bend?

(In Honor of the Glorious Lewis Carroll)

'Twas whimsical, summer slodding,
Which wept tawny dribs o'er the plain;
Green swards bloomed beneath bold plodding,
As frost razzed wilted rain.

“Behold, the Wabberjock, my child,
How it bounds, fev'rish, 'cross the vale!
Scrawlish journals prophesied of
Its magic, fierce and frail!

“The beast, it beckons, my fair sprite,
Its mournful bleat for bondness calls;
It mures with its miserous pright
And sprightly souls enthralls.”

The youth's unlocked core brimmed a'vaned;
Hushful, he tracked the Wabberjock,
'Til at long last its bellows waned
Behind the grit-glint rock.

While the nebulous night-song whirred,
He scrappled his plot of approach,
By his drubbing heart's justice spurred,
Yearning for the brute's touch.

Once mounted (and sorely amazed!),
The treasured fay was whisked anon,
Thus by freedom's raptful flames dazed...
Lo! The young ward was gone.

'Twas whimsical, summer slodding,
Which wept tawny dribs o'er the plain,
Green swards bloomed beneath bold plodding,
As frost razzed wilted rain.

What I've Learned from Wild Women¹

Were my name mentioned on the street, nobody
Would cock a head toward the source, tempted
Into a double take. Leaden, ignored,
Slithered esses and spit pees would stumble
Blindly, trip dumbly on crests of joyless,
Dull idiots' droning voices. Sing

Ho! And be merry! Celebrate and sing
Of the wild, triumphant feats nobody
Else could give a flying leap for! Joyless
And flat are the notes which we are tempted
Silently to tap out, as we stumble
Modestly toward meek results, ignored.

I came into this world by paths ignored,
Dusted over, mulched in muck, so I sing
For the souls of children who must stumble
Through dirty alleyways that nobody
Would choose to call the way home. I'm tempted
To perform numbers on all those joyless

Faces furrowed behind brows in joyless
Glass houses, like gutter vermin, ignored...
As a matter of fact, I am tempted
To wax asthmatic with the words I sing,
While raking the sewage for nobody
In particular, until I stumble.

As far as falling goes, I can stumble
Quite affectedly – I jeer at joyless,
Bulging, stifled, flailing sheaths; nobody
Can feign to leave me on my stage ignored,
Thus run-through to my humble core! I sing
Of your sweet shame; you are sorely tempted

To listen; by degrees you are tempted
To tap-dance down cobbled streets, to stumble
Out clamors that wake the mourners, to sing
Them into consciousness for the joyless
Brass band pageantry that can't be ignored,
Despite their anguish to be nobody!

Are you not tempted to give up joyless
Squalor, to stumble, raucously ignored,
Into vestibules where nobody sings?

¹ My 'Sestina Six' were randomly selected from "Celebrating Wild Women," a gift set of 52 cards and a magnet adorned with artwork and inspiring quotations from influential women, gifted to me years ago by my dear friend and *wild woman* in her own right, Michelle R.