

Robert Beveridge

Femme

for Gina Esposito

Gina, won't you come out to play?
Open your dress
and walk naked bathed
in the truth of the new moon.
Only then can you be you,
only then will the magic
of your breast be realized.
These rituals, they mean
only beauty to a man
I cannot see what it means
all the way down deep
to be a woman
under the new moon.
I only know that you
are beautiful in its light.

Numerator

Drops run down the window.
Blanket thick, but cold.
Even the birds have fled
to wherever birds go in storms.

Our Sunnyside Adventure

Of course it was Louis who called
for a pit stop at the most hipster
coffee shop you can conceive of,
who rushed up to the counter
with the craziest expression he
could muster and ordered
an everything beagle with welsh
rabbit. The rest of us were content
with caffeine, cream cheese, the code
to the restroom printed at the bottom
of every receipt to dissuade the homeless
from taking a dump here instead

of the alley out back. Henry checked
the board to see if tonight was open mic, José
just sipped his triple espresso and flexed,
relaxed, flexed, relaxed a foot numb
from fifteen hundred miles of gas pedal.

Three hours later Henry is onstage, strums
Danzig, passes it off as Hank Williams,
and the rubes throw money into his hat
while the rest of us sit there and try to cram
as much caffeine into our bloodstreams as we
can for the next leg of the trip and Louis still
finds a stray hair in his mouth every so often.

The Peg-Legged Man and the Red-Headed Woman

The snake curls around your
fist as easy as your index
finger curled around a trigger.
The cops replaced by congregation,
the shouts of “put ‘em up!”—no,
those still sound the same.
And the revelation, when it
comes, still blinds. All you’ve
changed is the particular
flavor of the Magic 8 Ball
you ask for guidance.
The answer remains static.

Prayers

I almost set aflame
the last poem I write you
with its veiled proposals
and prayers to things
I can't believe in anymore.

It came to me
that such a thing
could not be right.

I hide it, half hope
you will find it, see,
restore my faith in prayers

The Right Kind of Happiness

for Jeanne Volpe

I woke this morning
unfamiliar
with the red satin
around me

Of course, I'd met you
the night before
dark redhead
with silver-lined eyes
hummingbird pulse
beneath a white lace trellis

and in a moment
of lost control
I might have asked your name
not content
just to know you
as the dark girl
whose lips matched her hair

in a moment
of unexpected generosity
you might have accepted
my curious advances
and brought me home
surrounded me in satin
red like your hair
like the lips
that formed dark syllables
as we met:
"I wondered, too."

We lie side by side
in this dark room
nascent yet familiar feel
of a new body next to mine
as if we discover each other
again for the first time

The Right Kind of Happiness, 2, break

pressed together
we talk of nothing
familiar with the territory
the small things
that help me remember
the person who abducted
my desire

and carried it
to this red room
the room behind your lips
behind your hair.

About the Poet

Robert Beveridge (he/him) makes noise (xterminal.bandcamp.com) and writes poetry in Akron, OH. Recent/upcoming appearances in El Portal, Blood Moon Rising, and PTMN.TEAU, among others.