

East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

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Blanche Kabengele

City Kids

City kids off the beat
what else they got to do?

Let them use their minds,
if rap-if hip hop is what so pleases them.

Let them explore possibility and,
maybe in the end dream,

a new reality
for all of us.

you just don't know

you know how you feel
empty, like somebody just
fished all the fish out the
fish pond you planned to feed
your kids from,

and your kids,
pulling on your conscience,
because they're hungry

and you,
can't get no work,
cause women
like you, with no education,
like you, with no particular good looks,

with some pride,
refuse to go to
that whore house,

to work, to feed your kids,
cause any fool can see,
it's all your fault,
and you, bout tired of that man
playing drums on your head,

but you are your kids' momma
and you, gotta do something
but what that is,

you just don't know.

when will we

stop killing
the dead,
who are
most happy
to still be with us?

Gifts of nectar we leave
to those whose
tables are
already stocked,
and bonded,

and to those left to carry
water on their heads,
naught, but to remain
barefoot and dry
bark lotion less!
Blanche Saffron Kabengele

We the

We the
give me,
people
your...
and I will
give them, something.

we the sheltered,
people
believe, we
have suffered enough
and will continue
to suffer,

we the
manipulated,
easily influenced
people
know little, of what
real life is about

pass the Smart,
TV ready remote control

I-this, I-that
phone, pad, etc. and so on...

And so what,

I saw Hale-Bopp!

Life Bread

I remember when I was four, or five tearing the ends off white bread making a unique little thing, as a way in my childlike mind of ridding myself of identifying with the unfortunateness my family lived cocooned within.

Little did I know rich people drenched in luster did the same, with their bread, branding it canapes, disassociating from the poor so removed.

Such illusion granted protection to my reality,

for them such delusion insulated them from their apathy.

after all, pickles, are just cucumbers.

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Helen Curran

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Wolf's Clothing

Old hags tell their uncaring listeners
tales of a lurking beast
that army green leaves harbor
from the leaking lights of twilight.

She takes long, lazy strides as she hunts in the meadow,
step by step, her stilettos stab the soft ground,
red as her hood, red as the blood in her veins,
sharper than any knife, but sharp as her teeth.

Her long, lazy smile gleams as she stares down her prey.
With the glinting moonlight seized by her fangs,
she forms a blade of pure night, to sever the bare, innocent

stem of a white primrose to share with her friend, the wolf.

My Time Machine is Shaped Like a Shower

When I grow weary I pry open those translucent sheets
step over the great white gate
and ground my flat feet on that plain plastic
that doesn't judge doesn't speak
simply listens to the hollow sound of my breathing
and participates with my love of the rain

I creak down and lie my back to the tile wall
looking like a peaceful corpse my hair soggy
stuck on my skin comfortably damp
and there in a huddle watching my tiny waterfall
I'm grasped by a watery hug
and a stable moment stuck on rewind

Monkey Say, Monkey Do

Why
does the
monkey
ask the
fish
to climb
the
tree?
To
complain
when it
can't.

Like Helen's Work? Let them know!

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Thomas Strunk

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Piano for Sale

The old piano will need to be sold.
The dust has gathered on its black white keys,
the top lid cluttered high with magazines
and music books unread, their notes still scrolled,
the bench littered with more than it should hold.
The girls stopped playing years ago, gently
I stroke the flats and sharps and middle C.
I pause and feel the loneliness of old.
For months untouched, no sound no joy has come.
She left her music sheet, the Pathetique,
She could play it clean, she could play it cold,
could leave your lonesome heart shaken and numb.
She's gone now, it's okay, we bought it cheap.
The old piano may need to be sold.

Thoughts in Church on Mother's Day

I don't know my grandmother's name.
She died before I was born. And
my mom died
when I was young,
so I never got to ask
what it was like to live
motherless so long.

Did she curse the years?
Each birthday a pang of sorrow,
each mother's day a stroke of grief
or anger across the years
for how her mom abandoned her,
dropped off, an infant,
at her grandparents' small farm?

She found joy there on the outskirts
of town among the woods and fields,
and the people who loved her,
until she was eight
when her parents, rank strangers,
came to take her back.

My mother always told
how she missed the mountains
and hated the city, Camden,
where her father worked in the shipyards.
When she was old enough
she dropped out of high school
and returned to the Pocono Mountains.

I don't know my grandmother's name.
She died before I was born.
It is no small matter,
though still easily discovered I imagine.

Yet what cannot be found
in any archive, not in any newspaper
obituary, is how my mother learned
to live motherless so young.

It was not the wisdom
I thought I would need
the summer I turned twenty-one.

Like Thomas' Work? Let them know!

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Gillian Ramirez

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Growth

Like a thoughtless child wandering through a garden,
yanking flowers along the way
bit by bit you stole pieces of me
and kept them for yourself
not to use them, not to give to another,
solely so I could not have them
solely that I stayed with you,
hoping to earn them back
But it was only once the garden was empty,
barren, cold, devoid of any life that once inhabited it,
that I realized I didn't mind if you kept them
You can only take as much as I allow you to
so keep what you have
the parts that you stole are dead now
they'll never be able to grow again
but I can make a million more flowers
I can grow an infinite number of ways to love me
And how many times can the same thing hurt you?
As long as you love it, I think.

Rebirth

My body is molting
The old me shedding, peeling away slowly
There are dead limbs I need to prune
I will kill the parts of me
I can no longer carry
and use the pain as fertilizer
to grow the new me
And take her by the hand
And teach her how to crawl

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