

SELECTED POEMS

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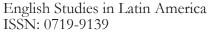
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Selected Poems

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THIS OR ANY FRIDAY

Lacking green water, knee high grass they

entered

the café.

She ordered

hamburger,

a chocolate malt.

His salad lay

in strips.

The lettuce

didn't blow like

grass

in winter wind.

The check

took pennies

from a piggy bank.

A palm plant

for their balcony

to replace...

She spoke

about the books

her doctor recommended.

His wife

too difficult

her black moods

nursing ailments

he couldn't cure

even as tall grass bends.

THE INVISIBLE CAN BITE

The wind refuses to be shaped. It re-forms the eucalyptus leaves

in its willy-nilly prance, avoiding the eye. When it roars its hurricanes

only the damage testifies, unlike the significant sun, bold-faced,

revealing my nakedness. Attempted analogies fall flat. Ink and print

are caught in their inadequacies. How easily we are diminished.

I hear the curse of no, the constant ache, shared in my consulting room.

She looks to me believing what I say can hold up the sky or prevent a deluge.

She's hungry for more than golden apples with the coming of bad weather. A stranger

had gathered figs but her brother's wife spit bitter wine too long held in her cold storage.

As wind rattles the window, it might be the voice of Jove still striving for immortality.

A WAY THROUGH

Gray wall. A chair. A table.
Through the tiny window a cloudless sky.
The feathered eucalyptus quivers
in the staccato wind. It doesn't reach him.
Even the invisible eludes. He waits
for footsteps to follow. The nocturne
he hears repeats, endless as the press of dark.
As a boy, before his father died,
he could invent, almost believe,
the undulating ocean, gulls
cutting the salty air, each in its own
cotillion, a passport of wings.

In another place, a man not old enough to vote, hangs by his thumbs, condemned for 20 years, a deadly crime. He travels at night to a far-off country. Rocks, sharper than thorns, have bruised his thighs. A camel transports him to a broad savannah. Green wind. A bend in the horizon beckons. He is free to follow, though crawling now among the prickly bush. Earth's moist fragrance quenches for the long haul. The dark finds passage.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

Though I forget to look for stars the universe continues its pirouettes, its extravagant expanse, putting us in our place. Bodies on the streets of Kabul gather flies. Heroes pinned with medals shine as though killing were equivalent to a supernova. Love, the supreme attraction, generates a longing to embrace. One day Andromeda will mingle with our Milky Way, a love-match we might emulate.

SHE DOESN'T WAIT FOR THE KINDNESS OF OTHERS

Morning greets its winter's tale, a fog obscuring all but my hurrah for

the nun

of 84.

She storms the gates. Protest! Prevent the deadly shame of nuclear devices

aimed

at war!

Behind the iron bars she smiles her unrepentant smile. Jesus, Buddha, Vishnu

forget

to brush

their teeth as they applaud this legacy.

No need to kneel. The sacred work is done.

Starlings

gather

in circular murmurations, the air renewed by a thousand wings. Visibility increases,

the fog,

a scrim,

no longer screens. How the oranges hang their holiness, consecrate the day!