

Corey Habbas

Brother

The peninsula, like an island, is Andros
coming down, His owl wings arcing
in a bridge over ocean from the cliff.

His moon eye that peers soft looks
of dream at lovers, is the temptation of vulnerable sleep.
There she is in His bright shadow coaxing you away.

On the rim of the port, the Raki flows at Papadakis,
and never what intoxicates her. They eat a month
of crescents, the butter of Malaga Cove that melts
the night into indigestible syrup.

Muscular men bring it back up into the air
with clapping and their joyful heels beating the floor.

All you can see is her spirit in talons. All you hear
are dishes breaking and the cries
of other men's festive passion. Your sorrow
becomes the delicate glitter of Italian lights.

As you stand near the cliffside you can see them
lassoing the peacocks with a road-blocking constellation.

Its steady glow produces the mirage of plumes that stretch
a path out over a sea where one wave-polished woman
equates to an ocean of virgins.

As you bypass the rocky shoreline of suicidal lovers,
which had once been the tall cliffs of a brave boy,
falling off, trusting to be pushed back by a gale,
a l yra sings for the peacocks and the dancing men,
persuading you of the democracy in dying.

Stow Away

Herman is the California
desert's leathered face,
cupped in the basin's Joshua fingers.

He had ridden a cargo ship over
Badwater from Sweden, and it delivered him
onto slopes formed from the milk of volcanoes
without pity typically given to a city beggar.

A boy will endure the worst beatings
from a man as long as he can stay
beside a mother who loves her boy
as the dirty damn strangers pick apart
his mother's blouse with vulture fingers.

He washes his hands with kerosene.
Kerosene is the soap and water of the desert.
The old rocks hide Herman
from the city; the pile on land
without a cross. The etched
womb of the valley stirs
with the wind of native spirits,
but Herman feels at home.

He lives like she's dead, under
a mourning rainshadow, and he tries
not to notice granite slopes
pushing up through the creosote bush.

Instead, he admires her dress
sewn from blue-lace agate,
harvests her endogenous eggs-
the hollow cavities fertilized with crystal-
and when the rock hounds have all but taken her,
and their trails are marked by poppies lit with sunfire,
Herman smells her sage sigh.

The adopted son
who never took a bride because
of how, in the desert, that kind of thing
can betray a man.

When he dies
he becomes a protected specimen
etched as if her tattoo's ink had bled a new river
and the wind carries its gift-
the rare dress of nubile snow.

On not Playing to Win

I lost the game in our empty closet
I have no worries,
for my Gumby plays Twister
on a bag of Wonder Bread.

Don't Call on Me

Oh, Trina. I'm in the dark
and you have me. The cap of
"Sizzling-Plum-Sunday" came off
and now I'm all marked up with the color
of your lips because of the swing of your hips
against your purse.

My buttons have chipped your studded nails
since you picked me up from the snow
from where the husband left me for lost, but

Leroy ratted you out
after a few drinks and a few calls from the wife.
From all that talk, that's what I've learned about the art
of breaking down. No matter how much battery.

I've gone from lost to stolen. Been blocked.
Drained, I gave the forest my call trail,
but the witch's oven doesn't even work around here.

Like in any prison where a woman is warden, I wish
for just one call before you yank my SIMM card.
I would tell him, "Don't come to the apartment.
Leroy and I passed out, and you'll be all alone with her."

Bio

Corey Habbas lives in Minnesota, and has written poetry that has recently appeared in Outsider Ink, Pemmican Press, Underground Window and PoetryMagazine.com. She holds a B.S. in Information Systems from California State University of Redlands. She grew up in Southern California.