

BlazeVOX 2k9

Fall 2009

Shelagh Davis

The Ambassador of Kensington Avenue

Under the steel blue arms of the El
She leans into the open window of our car
Are you okay, we ask

I'm okay, she says

Slender as thread
Spindle-shanked
Limbs
Dispersed
Thin strips twisting in the evening heat
Brown eyes diaphanous, delicate

I'm okay, she assures us

Rapacious heroin
Luminous
Shimmering in deceit
A counterfeit truth teller

You're okay, it confides

Liquid street poet
Slender as a minute hand
Sewing honeycombed dreams

Now relax, it serenades
into the nightmare.

The Benefits of Rejection Letters: A Memoir

I tried to write a short story about the picture my grandmother took out of the green photo album, but the story kept getting rejected because there has to be a plot, an arc, some action. I submitted it everywhere so all over the country lots of people read it and I received *sorry we can't publish* emails and letters from places like Missouri, Florida, Arizona, and Minnesota. It was exciting. All I wanted to say is it was the last picture of my mother and I was ten and I couldn't remember her name anymore. In the picture she was wearing a dark blue, sleeveless dress pulled in at the waist by a matching belt. Her waist was small like Elizabeth Taylor's. She was standing on the lawn in front of someone's house, facing the house like someone was taking her picture then getting ready to invite her in for a drink or dinner or something. She was smiling. Her arms reached down in front and she had her hands pressed next to each other holding the handle of a white purse. She had on a white pillbox hat and her black hair waved over bare shoulders. Not much happened because we weren't allowed to speak.

Schizothymic

Suck me fuck me
call me lady
white cunt white bitch
feed me baby
am I hungry?
do I bite?
suck me fuck me
black man white
I am princess
princess bitch
gutter butter
needs no pitch
I am white cunt
waiting wet
shake me shock me
make me sweat
black words white words
straight or sweet
stalk me rape me
city streets
I'll give you fifty
give you two
pay me lay me
grab your screw
liquor sucker
drunken bum
lick her suck her
straight man's scum
Hey, you, princess, can't you talk?
Fucking princess, can't you walk

In the Big Top

my mother's funny bone is in the wrong place, I live in a room at Toronto's YWCA
with her and my sister, everything's an emergency, my mop is primed to the sticking point, crazy
about you boiling water takes the white out of my father's shirt, my mother's arm dangles like a
dumb swing, for her the stove isn't for cooking, she keeps buckjumping into this one doorway
rodeo, his wheel about blue eyes spinning upside down then, *I beat her good last night* he says to the car
windshield, me sitting next to him bubblewrapped, my sister in the backseat crying all the way to say
goodbye, my marbled up mother's head is sealed with vasoline, her wavy black hair glued, she has
papermache arms and a green mermaid's tail, we sing "Hello Dolly" upon my father's command,
she's at a matinee, I pinwheel off this merry-go-round of sorrows and gypsy into the midway.