

Blaze VOX 2k9

Late Spring 2009

Michael Estabrook

a space not crowded

On weekends I would drive an hour
to her school to study with her there in the library,
a cold concrete place, ten stories high,
with dull gray carpets and thin metal shelves.

We'd find a space not crowded,
spread out our papers and books, work in silence
doing calculus and embryology, genetics,
physics and organic chemistry.

But sometimes I'd bring Browning or Byron,
Tennyson or Wordsworth, and whisper
their lines across the table at her
turning the ugly windowless concrete
tomb of a room into a pine forest with butterflies
and a softly murmuring brook, yellow,
blue and red flowers covering its banks.
And she'd smile at me then.

White Nylons Flashing

Hard to forget the steamy
yellow summer of 1968
working in the ice cream stand pouring
thick creamy mix into cold metal hoppers,
filling stainless steel bins
with wet walnuts, fudge
& marshmallow toppings, remaining behind
to clean the machines after everyone else
had gone home. sometimes
during rush-hour crowded
with fat adults & dirty screaming kids
I'd stand there among
my beloved machines
(like Quasimodo in his bells) gazing
at the girls working, (at my Esmeraldas) smiling,
glancing back at me their perfect
smooth forms moving gracefully,
hair motionless beneath hairnets,
sneakers squeaking on the bright
tile floor, white nylons flashing.

away in South Africa

My wife is on
a business trip,
recruiting more au pairs for her cluster
all the way away in South Africa,
she might as well be on the moon.
My first concern
is for her safety,
Africa is not exactly a walk in the park.
Millions of people (I've heard up to 40%)
are infested with AIDS, then there's
all the famine, ceaseless tribal warfare,
the poachers, racial hatred
and genocide. rampant poverty,
brutality towards women . . .
and who knows what else.
Anyway, I'm justifiably worried
about my wife being plunked down
in the midst of all that.
But the Au Pair of America officials
have assured us that she will
be well looked after,
chauffeured, cared for,
that she will be safe.
So like any nervous husband
would do to fight the jitters
in this technology driven
and dominated world,
I am crossing my fingers
and praying for the best.

waiting for my wife's return

I sit down suddenly
on the floor in our upstairs hallway.
The floor is cold as is the closet door
I lean against. I hold my forehead
in the palm of my hand.

It isn't a heart attack
or even my normal acute back pain.
I'm not having a sudden panic attack
over being so deep in debt
or because I'm not sure exactly where
my children are right now,
like we'd worry when they were younger
and still under our roof.

I am simply suddenly sullen
in my starkly silent house alone,
in the early evening waiting
for my wife's return
from her business interview with
a young handsome father from Sweden,
a wealthy widower in search of childcare.

Oh well, nothing to worry about,
she'll be back in good time,
home to me after her business is done.
Yes, she'll return back home soon,
she'll return to me, I'm sure of it
I'm sure she will return. I am.

Pomme frites

Living in Belgium,
our apartment across
a busy street from a *pomme frites* stand.
The nice old lady there with
the pink cheeks made the best fries,
crisp and hot and salty,
wrapped in a clear white paper.
On those pervasively cold,
wet and murky nights
they kept you warm both inside and out.
One evening my wife went over
to get us some *frites*
and as she waited at the curb to cross
a car sprung out of nowhere
struck an old man down
into the gutter right at her feet.
One of his eyes popped out
and hung down on his raspy gray cheek.
As she cried, her pretty head
upon my shoulder, I stroked her long,
silky brown hair
and told her not to worry, eyes
are easy enough to pop back in.

THE RUMBA WITH PATTI

Basic Box

Underarm Turn

Crossover & Walkaround Turn (brush step end)

Open Break & Arch Turn

Open Break & Arch Turn to

DHH to corners 5 times end with turn

Crossbody Lead

Crossbody Lead to Cuban Walk to Man's Turn

Forward & Backward Rocks

Offset Breaks from Closed Position

end with man's RF back

try not to stare at her perfect shape moving

or look into her shining mink-coat brown eyes

because then you might step on her feet