

Christina Strigas

Amuse Me

As he entered my mouth
I drenched in his need

his wit and humor
groan across my nipples

evoking heat
a warmth of childhood;

darkness long forgotten,
rise another realm

my lips to let him sit.
Enter my pores gradually

detach from the dirt.
Desperation is in the room

dirty wordplay
inching down my inviting throat,

touching my unbeautiful belly,
grotesque thighs

letting him get his money
off my old skin, my rent is due.

Appointment

Talk to dead ghosts.
forget doctor appointments,
today is always Death.

everyday reaps new novels
of reason, to hold our sun closer—
Death anniversaries are the hardest to celebrate

*Wandering women like us
Laugh and cry at the same start*

I am
writing your story, I am every man too.
I am every woman contemplating death.
How to kill her husband.
How to kill herself and survive.
bring me another doctor death,
I will serve him with poems
show him how I never tried to die—
only in poetry.

I will tell tender-hearted women,
*Let go of stifled binary inhibition
Let go of this image of men so distasteful
Swish them in your mouth*

*Spit them out.
Cut them out into words,
Prop them out.
Instill your thoughts*

I am right here for you,
holding onto doctor life,
making all the dead ghosts coffee.

Yiayia Maria

She taught me how to love
raised us in a tiny apartment
while my parents worked
five grandchildren in her arms.

my love of nature because of her
plantings,
my first cup of Greek coffee from her hands,
stir, wait for the froth,
lift the briki (pot)
ena, duo,
pour in tiny cup.
Never forget the glass of water.

Her attitude
snarky,
mocking my choice of men
my eccentric clothes,
sarcasm, her music.

afterlife will flow better now—
plan the rapid conception of midnight.

if you want your grandmother to pursue you,
after death
have a daughter,
bring air to her breath.

hospital air is lovely when
you see your child for the first time—
five-forty a.m., I created life
one push for twenty minutes
no epidural, a natural birth.
Maria, was born,
reborn,
born again
her tiny head resting on my skin,

like a kitten.
I lay there breastfeeding
breathing
caressing her baby skin
smelling her,
touching her dark full head of hair,

now I lay all day
giving milk,
sleeping, eating, sleeping, producing milk.

looking at the clock
missing the funeral.

*You were supposed to be named Maria, after me,
there are already two Christina Strigas's
in Greece.*

*Don't worry, Yiayia, when I have a daughter
I will name her Maria.*

It's odd, but Greg's parents
were named John and Maria
so are our children.

My promise at ten years old
came true, like the words I uttered.

Maria, my dreaming daughter,
I hope you have her spunk.

I gave birth, Yiayia died.
Two days apart, in life,
ninety years apart, in birth.

*Your clothes didn't match,
choking on food and asthma attacks.*

not missing one wise-ass comment.
she was always right,
but oh, how she loved us
how she cooked lentils for us
how she stood up for us
how she laughed with us
how she cried when cousin John died
how tough of a woman she was
always standing up for herself
never backing down from men—

and that's what I liked best about her.
what I hated dearly,
memorial victor and spunk
her hemming of my dresses
making Prince outfits out of velvet curtains

she never denied my creativity
she taught me to be stronger than any man

that she passed down to my daughter,
Maria.
I don't know how she did it
but she did.