

Phyllis Mass

In Retrospect

It's for the kimono-sleeved work dress you wore and ruined in your youth.

The moment they met, she showed her the framed award on the wall.

Her mother wore it to the Oscars, the year she won best actress.

An Orthodontist turned soccer star in *Overbite*,
she kicked a head of red cabbage during her audition,
startling the director, who shouted,
that's her, that's my little Dentessa.

Whether meeting her blind father on a blind date,
or feeding her mother's blind-drunk fifth husband dates,
he remembered them all,
or turning a blind eye to the weather
or marrying in a blind rage
and mixing doubles round the clock till divorce blind-sided her,
a light box kept her sunny side up.

Part of her died in 1981.

The rest in 2007.

She's planning a comeback.

The trick will be coming back.

Ode To My Discontinued Pencil

Little hexagonal canary tail,
once a crown prince
now a commoner.
Son of the Roman stylus,
your tiny flecks,
adhere to paper fibers
wrapped in string,
encased in hollow
wood.

Written in zero gravity,
your wingless army
stretches 'round the earth
43 times or more.

Scattered breadcrumbs
before rubber
erased mistakes.

*Sensamatic auto feed mechanicals,
no clicking,
ever sharp,
like a real number 2 model
only better.*

From the first,
the silver stream
transmuted
the mundane
into gold.
I tossed
my *Meisterstruck*.

Having found Nirvana,
I resent further exploration.
I'm not Lewis and Clark
nor *Walden's* Thoreau.
When the final
one-legged fossil
exhausts its core,
I will sing
a bitter hymn,
and move on.

A Little Mystery Goes A Long Way

i kissed your
blue hands
begged you
take your gloves

you said
goodbye
not certain if
you'd revisit

i need to know
your candle burns
that you are serene
that there is not nothing