

BEN NARDOLILLI

EVENING GAG

Hate set you back like a thin silver dial.
The doctor squeezed your palms, and your hairy smile
Took its time outside the elements.

Our steps are quiet, shrinking your departure. Old painting.
In a warm lyceum, your textiled self
Glow for our danger. We sit square clear as windows.

I'm something less than your father
The mountain that stains a chalkboard to reflect its own fast
Escarpment at the water's toes.

All day your butterfly eyes
Stay bright among the sharp red tulips. I sleep to see:
A near valley sits on my tongue.

Two whispers, and I run from bed, horse-light and rooted
In my paisley shirt.
Your lips close crooked as a giraffe's. The ceiling, flat

Darkens and pours out its bright moonshapes. And then you try
Your gallon of numbers;
The opaque consonants fall like globes.

REMEMBER THE PUEBLO

Strive at left, for instance,
avoid the loud and aggressive
in sudden misfortune,
with whatever your labours

persons strive for high life
they too have their story
and everywhere life is your soul
fall not into a good time
they are vexations

know what to kiss
for always the world
is full of aspirations,
compare yourself with others
it may be your lot,
but do not keep peace with your love.

A COCKATOO

After a rug mingle, that old catastrophe,
The joyful loss of an hour on a Sunday afternoon,
A puzzle hammered into bleeding cardboard
To make no perfect picture, only an image,
Now it is to living room darkness with sleep
Brought to us by Mercury on extended wings.
Seas of complacencies abound and we raft to stay
Free from drowning through our suburban distrust,
The memory of previous undulations sufficient—
We float in dry disgust, crumpled into sawdust.
Downward in the kitchen are coffee and oranges,
She rises and abandons the placental afterglow to me,
Having dreamed a small casual flock of dreams,
There is now an embroidered cloth to cover the body
And slip a sunny tag on the bottom of my big toe.
Her ancient sacrifice complete, she showers away,
I break out from the imperial Persian background
To the sound of her unambiguous holy hush around me.
Still naked, I sit on a nearby chair and dissipate,
On the vacant leather throne, a horseless chariot awaits.

Ben Nardolilli is a twenty four year old writer currently living in Arlington, Virginia. His work has appeared in *Houston Literary Review*, *Perigee Magazine*, *Canopic Jar*, *Lachryma: Modern Songs of Lament*, *Baker's Dozen*, *Thieves Jargon*, *Farmhouse Magazine*, *Elimae*, *Poems Niederngasse*, *Gold Dust*, *The Delmarva Review*, *Underground Voices Magazine*, *SoMa Literary Review*, *Heroin Love Songs*, *Shakespeare's Monkey Revue*, *Cantaraville*, and *Perspectives Magazine*. He was the poetry editor for *West 10th Magazine* at NYU and maintains a blog at mirrorsponge.blogspot.com.