



The Trapeze Is Always Flying

Elizabyth A. Hiscox

Calls himself an artist, but he's just tide riding
like the shag carpet catching light
on the nightboat moored
all disco and barbeque downwind –
downstream – from the cathedral.

In the over-etching of the bohemia glass
(that stained window for the lips' pressure)
a frog is dancing (ballet, hoop) and crickets bicycle.
Liqueur becomes a sacrament to whimsy.

This is the renegade nature of tradition:
fraying at the edges of each century.
Every generation eating their own eyeballs
with tongue in cheek, *got your nose*.

The flyer for a hog of unusual size
is a hundred-years-on legible
and the gathering place is once again
nasturtiums and lollipop wrappers:
no net and, as always, free admission.

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Your body'd gone

Elizabyth A. Hiscox

silent. 'Unresponsive' was the word
paraded around. I, crossing your arms,
felt my own muscles itching to uppercut—
to unsmug them right out of their lab coats.

You settled on another salvation:
site of stable dust, sunlight, a wheelchair
of height and twitch. A horseshoe nailed
above the entrance, luck-side up.

My bones ached irony: Hope Corrals.
A valuable operation, under-funded.

We took you on a Tuesday afternoon
like this was beginning. No naiveté of morning.
None of Sunday's goodbye nonsense.

We, your reluctant attendants: sudden believers.
Shasta, and Tunstall Sue, and Westward
approached, bent their heads, soft mouths
to your quiet oat-filled hands. Westward
was everything as he brushed his mouth over your hair—
as no one moved to smooth— knowing
this gift of tangle and moist was more
than years of us crossing, uncrossing.

Ascent to Shasta's back— the certified
disabled saddle. Your beautiful, overmuch
helmet, and that slow gait of horse and rider.
A cycle punctuated with the tap of hardground hoof
and your *here now, here now*, encouragement
I'd swear was meant to guide us.

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From the Fishhouse: An Audio Archive of Emerging Poets <http://www.fishhousepoems.org/>
This poem is also included in Elizabyth's chapbook *Inventory from a One-Hour Room* from
Finishing Line Press.

The Rivers' Mouth

Elizabyth A. Hiscox

once:

We've always known. Death
unhinges the jaw.

Ptah, in his feathered costume
of a cast out delta religion,
awash in a protestant nation's
exhibition hall. "*Implements
to mouth*" a placard sedately
relates a calling out of spells to restore

There was a limbering of the lips
with old world libations, "*ritual, known
as The Opening of the Mouth.*"

twice:

Sixteen and lost in Nebraska
in the ripening confusion *here dear
meet some of your kin, your
age.* A family reunion
with cousins training
for death. The family biz
out Midwest, of dressing up the dead.

Morticians, the Latin rose
to the surface in that word.
A career fair a week before
beautician, mathematician, no
mention of this

*"the body's mouth was then
touched."* The spells these young
men with my blood must know:
how to match the lips of the gone
with the memories
looking in: *Desert Rose, yes, her
favorite.* open casket; closed
sarcophagus. Either way.

thrice:

A boat beneath.
A pair of wings.

“Spells to restore the senses were recited”

Farmland and lace collars, bird
gods and gilt mummiform
statues. Requests across ages

for a final inspiration. Desire
held to the lips of those
who have no need.

Statistician...

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The Fourth Dynasty in Limestone

Elizabyth A. Hiscox

Pepy is carved largest, as is customary.
Egyptian for the most important figure. Mother
to the two boys, or the one. It is not
our world, where one exists but once.

The boy at her knee,
is the boy at her shoulder.
It is not our world: one is set in stone
and then again. Perhaps we understand:

it is Picasso and moment after moment
on the turning face, on cube-planed face,
all the movements of an eye in one fell swoop—
Time's uncustomary reconciliations.

How would we be, in our world, doubled
up in time around you? Mother
to the two girls,

and the one.

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The Sugargap Node of Ranvier

Elizabyth A. Hiscox

1.

Sugar, glorious sparked synapse of a mare—
your clairaudient episodes, those quick hinges
to another world full of aural nettle,
the gadflies iridescent scratch,
unset me. Once to a bramble
dye berries, of blooming juice red wet red my oxygenated poppy spots:
all blood scramble like vine,
screamchild in sun.

2.

Next, the scar-clank of hail, the clatter happy iron roof:
a canal to glazed eyes, your
charge to mudtumble embankments.
A Black Margate—
you were a skin shine changeling of water torque
and hook. Harness flail, and again, ears snapped to sound
past storm, fissures of light open signals decoding up
lash dot vertebra.
An angle at nightfall.

3.

Next, blank. Urban. Gutters funneling sky, memory
for horses. Life an XY axis text acid base
nerves shrinkwrapped to cocktail forks nerves sheathed
like chicken wire. Gaps happen.
In this fright I missed
that muscle twitch you sensed a wearthin noise oncoming:
the future's foxgrab at
exposed lines.

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Cakes and Ale

Elizabyth A. Hiscox

What I believe – to the point of distraction –
is what you articulate so off-the-cuff
(at Keats' expense). It quakes like a promise:
Beauty is a blind alley.

It's the Truth. And this is why I can't ever
get to that next. Switch backing to catch again
a glimpse of globe-mallow in the setting sun,
of radiance off Snyder's page. Corn kernel.

What list of India, what rite of spring can save me
from my simple adoration for the uncracked cup,
uncomplicated fan of wild-rose, the way
a man can stand with moonlight full on his face?

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Shiny Magazine on the Finer Things

Elizabyth A. Hiscox & Douglas S. Jones

1. What Chefs Want to Know about Time (Wine)

The DMV line is a reduction,
aromatic and simmering compact
to flavor the kiosk's open mouth.
Fake-tan—carrot skins; meth-father—
onions or roast bones weeping
marrow through concentric rings, saw marks.

How did we get here—“smile—no teeth”
chin up is not parallel parking and we all fear the kale
of the freeway merge. Crisp sound of fender to paint,
fork to gristle. Lovely, work for the cinema.
Those stories cling to the palate without tannins.

The employee's hand, thin
and slender, is shaped for pushing
garlic under chicken skin, for reaching
between alternator and manifold
to finger-pinch the dropped spatula.

2. Travel: New Orleans on Six Meals a Day

No mascara means a bad day sometimes
and I heard “everybody's got a dead-guy story,
now.” The crabshacks are closed—the
debutant diners don't know where the line ends,
how to make dirty rice with that taste
caught in every single orifice.

They say the flavors of a Po' Boy
should run from the elbows,
color the floor, the thighs of your jeans.
Everyone has their story and no
one asks about water stained ceilings.

Everybody wants to stain their thighs
at least once in their life. With God
or man—everyone wants ecstasy.
Snap the back of the crawfish—suck
out the head for flavor. Salvage. Salvation.

Tallow Candles and Light

Elizabyth A. Hiscox

It's the story. That poverty
leads to consumption of light itself.

It is the sidebar that is the mystery and, ironically, core.
It is the tallow candles after

six weeks rain and longer fallow potato fields
that give warmth to systems entirely internal.

The trivial is not trivial. It is intimacy.
The rendering of fat, the rendering

down to a moment in the dark
where you take your hand,

take what's left of last fall's slaughter,
last November's open barrels,

that hot day of dipped wicks and swirl,
and unfold all in your palm like a sacrament:

keep this house alive for a number of hours.
Hours counted, *God willing*, on two hands.

Tsunamis, earth-shatterings, Minoan hair twist
of newly-set curls cinched quickly under

tide and rubble – these are sex in the middle
of the kitchen floor. Sex in the town square.

I am speaking of corners. I am speaking
of the mirror held to nostril. I am speaking.

That, is something that will only happen for
so long – trivial and complete.

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