

On Holiday

Tonight I caught the hot hazed twilight
 Throw me a dirty look.
 One sky lamp only, Venus, burned
 Brazen, bare, unbeautiful,
 Beckoned to Diana, rump modestly in gauze:
 And I stiffened with the yellow cramps of disillusion
 As the rat of guilt gnawed likelihood away
 And its poison sickened sense
 So that jealousy in feverous delirium
 Flung fitful improbable patterns of twisting thighs and
 wriggled vows
 In daily colours across my analyzing mind
 That understood self-punishment can't atone
 For wrongs to others; and battling to reject
 This new-willed torment, this cerebral canker in my crotch,
 I screamed my isolation, my facade:
 "No, goddamn it, no. I'll not accept it, no.
 I'm like the moon, not Shelley, but the moon:
 Cracked in two by envy, edged with spite,
 A heap of rock and dust,
 Far and empty, arid, jaundiced,
 Merely glazed to mirror borrowed brightness
 I bear nothing, owe nothing, admit nothing."

 And no one took my hand.
 I searched the summer sky for solace,
 Clenched my teeth, fixed my mind and stared.
 But nothing proved me wrong.
 No lunar sign of kinship streaked the evening
 And the fickle goddess didn't seem to say
 "It's your doing, Stop it if you wish."

 Stopped outside a cafe. Time for resolutions.
 Ordered beer and four instantaneous rotations of the earth.

Deliberately, I filled my glass beyond the rim,
Watched the froth balance uncontained a moment,
Lose its effervescence and slink down the side to slop,
Grinned, threw back my head and gulped.

Daniel Stokes

Pieces

Clawing frantically
at the seconds we had together,
at first we merely drew blood.
Now, grasping more desperately,
the chunks we gouge from one another
stain brown the white
of silent morning eyes,
leave ragged wounds
which rot and fester
through days of one-place settings
and half-empty beds.
How long will it be until
the night when we roll over
to touch each other and find
our wrists raw bleeding stumps?

Janine Zwicky