

Exacting Clam



Nº 18

Autumn 2025

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ERIC WEISKOTT

FOUR Poems

PREFERENCES

Her desire to be tied up versus his to be served.

Compromise is possible,
but sexual congress is our loneliest form of government.

Her desire to be incarcerated versus his to be elect.

A stadium is ancient architecture
for containing and apportioning fantasy.

I love you because with you I feel least alone.

Through language I conceal that part of myself I'd prefer
to share with you. *Are you at daycare yet,*

did you arrive, please pass my wallet.

Anne Carson writes that sex is like money or language,
a substitute.

Come to find, life is mostly substitution.

The language of money pinches like desire.
Through it we consent

to our form of government,

which is the language of consent.
This too is a transposition.

I consent to our children,

to our bread, to our argument,
I consent to the senate of crows erect and alert

on yon telephone wire. These days,

I love you because I feel alone.
The poem: ancient architecture.

Come to find, I conceal that part of myself.

BARCAROLLE

BARCAROLLE: An Italian river song in triple measure.

Visual memory is poor (compared to auditory).
It is easier to hear with the mind's eye
than to see with ears of another world:

listen to this barcarolle
the torch being carried across
the threshold of another world.

It is easier to relinquish
the sensation of rocking,
the sensation of sight,

than a barcarolle when in Venice.
I can't remember your face just now.
The torch of sight

departs before blind darkness arrives
in Venice or anywhere,
the threshold of another song.

I see in my mind's eye
a boat,
another world.

Meditation

In my crawlspace fiddling
with some plastic snaptop bins
I'm thinking about lunch plans
and John Wayne Gacy
and final wishes.
The arch of a sepulcher
through which a form of prayer escapes.
The bins contain Christmas ornaments
although I am Jewish
(although I am no longer a Jew)
because my atheist wife believes in the form
of Christmas. Gacy drew
diagrams for the boys
he hired to dig man-sized holes
who did not know they were digging graves.
The leakage of his 33 murders
found its exacting formal container
in gravely annotated diagrams
of a crawlspace. To dig a hole
without knowing what it is for
only certain that it is deepening
like a sepulchral chord.
I'm finished fiddling:
I back out doubled over
so I appear to be bowing.

BOB DYLAN'S VOICE¹

contains its own photonegative
a blue note upon the deep.
Voice is beyond communication
a collect call from fortune
a new word for desperation
wailing of chimes
way out among the mountain laurel.

The endless road runs straight
into the garden gates
and on through the Temple of Dagon.
I couldn't help but follow
a stuttering foot inside the meter
a palace of mirrors
architecture of the larynx.

No angel's voice whispers
across a changed Mississippi.
until cruel death.
Forty-eight Minnesotas later
the dark room of his mind
stitches still mending
rough melisma.

¹Bob Dylan, "Changing of the Guards," *Street-Legal* (1978), and "High Water (For Charley Patton)," *Love and Theft* (2001).