



From Ink361

Margaret DelGuercio

Crime Scene

i

Talon, a Newfie, greeted folks
at the mahogany wraparound bar
while Bobo juggled stuffed tigers as he did
every Wednesday for Pot Luck at Syllabub.

Around 6:30 table #5 claimed the last four
meatloaf specials with mashed potatoes
and mushroom gravy to die for—“Mummy,
I have to make—” propelled MaryJo with Shauna

to the ladies’ room mouthing ordermetwoslicesofberrypie
plus kisses for her husband squeezing past her mother-
and father-in-law and 4-year-old Johnnie.
She was busy changing Shauna’s pink jumper

when two hooded gunmen stormed the pub.

With automatic rifles they shot four people—
two men, a woman and a small child.
Just like that. The taller one said,

“Nice dog!” with an accent, Polish maybe
or Russian, on his way past the bar,
lifting a bottle of vodka and olives,
then raced out a side door.

MaryJo ran to the table screaming
“Why? Why?” shielding her daughter’s eyes.
Nobody moved. People turned off
juke boxes out of respect.

Bobo covered the bodies with blankets.
Everything happened in slow motion
(until the S.W.A.T. team arrived).
In shock MaryJo murmured,

“We aren’t important enough to murder.”
Police guided witnesses into banquet rooms
behind the pub where they were questioned.
Syllabub, a Burlington County landmark,

became a crime scene.

ii

And so, you want to know
 who did it
and why.

Supposedly somebody owed bad people \$55,000,000.
But not the Millers, who owned
dry cleaning businesses,
not munitions factories.

Wrong bar. Wrong business. Wrong family.

Days after the hit, the gunmen’s bodies
were discovered in Brighton Beach
by a canine unit, their throats slit.
MaryJo knew it would be comforting

if there were a reason for what happened;
but she couldn’t find one. Just

a baby, Shauna wouldn't remember much.
MaryJo thanked God for that.

Looking for _____

i
Sky

I could spend forever looking for nothing
or maybe a shade of pale blue at five
while I was doing something for everybody
else to see, like going around the circle
duck, duck, duck, duck, duck—GOOSE—racing back
not caught this time slam sliding whew!
safe onto the rug back to my place—sky
blue in Maplewood, New Jersey.

ii
Proof

I always tapped a kid who couldn't move
fast enough to catch me. I did arithmetic
fast too with a pencil, never math in my head
until plane geometry. I'd fall asleep
mulling over a problem and the proof
would flash into my mind way before
snap, crackle, pop and freshly squeezed orange juice.

iii
Choirs of Angels

*Admitted to hearing angels sing
but failed to confess visions of isosceles
triangles in neon colors doing the hokey pokey.*

Because my teachers sang in the choir
and rang antique lead bells
at our United Presbyterian Church.

More into designing costumes,
I sang loudly, not beautifully.
Pure Chagall, my angel costume
radiated heaven
even with nobody inside.

iv
Dice

In college probability class I lapsed
into controversial multiple solutions.
Dr. Wolf rasped, "You goof off.
Stop dreaming and do the hard math."
When I resisted warnings, Wolf launched
red acrylic dice at my head.
When I showed up for class as an angel,
he signed a withdrawal slip.

v
Swerve

And so, defecting to Shakespeare,
I stopped dreaming mathematics.
But when I teach *Hamlet* as a fractal,
I roll those red dice in my head
until it's time in the text
for choirs of angels to sing
Hamlet to his rest.

(Zounds, do not take this literally.
I am a poet in or out of the angel costume,
which I still own, by the way, even wear
occasionally in lieu of academic robes,
wings collapsed, halo in hand.)

Margaret DelGuercio's work has appeared in such publications as *Rhino*,
Kaleidoscope, *Creosote*, *The Rockford Review* and the *Journal of New York
Poets*.