



Image from Trak-life

Drew Nacht

Two Poems

The Knife Was No Dream

Unlike a fish which cannot fathom the arms or the agony
or the closest mammal of our kind,
the agile primate which can grow sad
but never conceive of thrusting a knife into its own abdomen,
I know how she sees herself, but there is an army to stop her—
there are counselors to put words in her head
and little kamikaze pills willing to jettison their own lives
in an attempt to save hers.

There are even places to live, a colony of like-minded souls,
but in restless sleep my dreams have better ideas:

I imagine a compliant, almost eager wife
who puckers her lips as I apply her lipstick.

My date is amused by the mirror highlighting the pretty dress
I bought her that she fits in so beautifully.

She may be a woman who no longer has a head
for normal conversation over dinner at an elegant restaurant,
but is clearly still pleased to be there as she nods at my words,
looking at me straight in the eye with a little smile.

In that moment, I forget the last stop of the evening
will be the same voluntary prison which has separated us for so long,

until I am awakened by her shrieking in pain after damaging a tooth,
having taken a hard bite out of an empty spoon.

Shoes

At my son's behest we had a serious powwow about his love life.
The girl he is engaged to did something to provoke second thoughts.
Before our talk we engaged in a ritual that is our habit before
 serious family discussions
This peculiar family ritual, which began with my parents,
who were married for sixty years,
tended to make us think twice before opening our mouths,
making us more sensitive to different points of view.
My son evidently felt better after our talk
because he joked that he could not go through with the wedding
until he introduced our family ritual to his fiancée.
I voiced my surprise that he had not told her before the issue reached me,
though I was happy to contribute.
I reminded him that his Mother and I had to overcome feelings of strangeness
concerning the ritual as well—
for me it was introducing it, for his Mother, accepting it.
But as his Mother is fond of saying,
while it was easy to fit her whole foot into my shoe,
just the act of placing part of my larger foot into her shoe
made all the difference in the world.

Drew Nacht's writings have appeared in *Chronogram*, *Penmen Review*, *CC &D*, *The Loch Raven Review*, and elsewhere. His work has been presented on Israel National radio and by performance artists in Chicago. His book of poems, *Conversations with Langston Hughes*, was published by the African World Press in 2018.