



From Cleantuesday.

Ann Power

Alien

“Step up. Step up.”

We think this invitation,
not directive.

It is a voice we ignore,
laughing at a joke
(an apple lobbed from a hostile branch)
that reduces genealogical routing
to Adam and Eve.

Tired of beseeching,
the grey parrot meows loudly.
And I am thinking of the parrot part
we play, imitating, outwarding
inner selves that mirror manner
and what of us is
not us
that perhaps becomes us.

You investigate the ledger of

the past, re-spinning familial thread
that holds a world together
to make some sense.

What consequence?

And I have given up searching
for Peter Stuyvesant, though only I
appreciate the humor,
winding spaghetti around the fork's
frail tines.

You think to see a show by
assembling relatives, dead or not;

I think perhaps that is
possible,
perhaps already in progress.

"Step up."

The Practical Godmother: *Hendiadys Potion*

Sliding down
imagination's glassy escarpment,
I twinkle into light:
spindle spiral, double helix,
changing "never" into "ever."

Imperative summons!
Elaborations: a sigh, a word –
longing's noisy wishes like garrulous
crickets
rasp their insistent file,
and I appear,
rustling the edges of reality
as skylarks unfold the day.

Witchweed wand and claret cup
(for clairvoyance), and
I attend the heart.

Ashes and guilt, ashes and guilt,
a transitory magic;
the wrinkled linen of substance
exchanged for the gauze garment,
appearance.

I admit ennui wearied by
the conventional method;
pumpkin and a dozen mice.

Not the life imagined,
flowering from the mermaid wish,
but the imagination lived
allows the vantage –
a keyhole bilocation through which we
look and looking
see ourselves:
the act caught in the act.

Not schizophrenic absurdity
but life and desire, one – a *hendiadys*,
fitted as smoothly as sealskin glove to the hand,
as conductor who is instrument and music,
who is orchestra,
the Cinderella slipper exchanged for the
slipper concept,
foot and shoe, foot as shoe.

Blue Shallows

Beneath the shut heart,
the lullaby is silent.

In arms that never forget the absence,
lies an unquieted crying.

Her mind extinguishes the candles of
each celebration, the years lengthening,
never waning.

And the small figure in her imagination, wreathed
in sunlight,
forever wades in the blue shallows, leaving

tiny footprints in the sand that
the waves do not erase.

In the ethereal realm of
could have been,

the happy ending spins
a cocoon.

Ann Power's work has appeared in such publications as *The Pacific Review*, *The Puckerbrush Review*, *Limestone*, *The American Poetry Journal* and *Spillway*.