

Caffe Trieste

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I've got this feeling
that the woman and man kissing
in the alley behind Caffe Trieste
are in a movie; she's Susan Hayward
back lit against the strata of tenements,
a light in one window casting shadows
on the shabby pools of rain

I watch them to see if their performance
will keep love alive.
We say our children do that for us.
But who is there to invent the discourse of desire
when inside our pajamas our flesh slumps
toward sleep.

In the televised version of my life,
the hero must decide whether to spit out
or swallow a mouthful of glass.
I want to say something
but am afraid of the harm words do.

It's late November.
The haze has deepened over the stubbly field
gone to weeds and sold for detached single-family homes.
For now it's a world of stems and shards
echoing back the moon.

Love is a primitive territory.
We can't survive in it merely with words.
I can hardly remember the way our arms felt
under the blankets the first time they lay together,
gorged on the pure fat of love.

Memory will not save her loveliness,
like the grass that blooms each year clandestinely.
Would a woman like that come home to Kimlee Drive?

The houses here were built for next to nothing
and now cost a fortune . Each year I pay out more
than I have just to make myself feel alive.

Published in *The Blue Sofa Review* – Volume 2, Number 1 – Spring 2000