

**Three Poems by Cynthia Cruz**

**Chronic**

How I love the hospital  
Gift shop—pocketing the penny

Candy and ghosting the dusty aisles  
The other dead have.

Remembering when  
I was locked in the Starver's Ward

With the other almost-girls.  
How I miss that summer

When there was no world.  
Smoking endless cigarettes

On the fenced-in roof.  
A teenage slumber party,

The days had no beginning or end  
And was one seamless dream.

As the months piled up  
To nothing.

Rain when I woke  
Sounded like horses.

A little musical surgery  
Right now, just might kill off

This warm narcotic of nostalgia, this wish  
For a sweet smear

Death. Like the train I took

Through Paris on my honeymoon

In a silvering storm,

This room becomes a kind of

Wake, a milk-bashed reverie.

It's true: my little sister is trying to die

With me. It's true: the world ran out

And the jewel they put inside us.

What with the small massacres of childhood

Followed by the decades of hospitals.

Like a teenage car wreck,

No survivors, just God,

Breathing on the last moments

Of the child, living.

This, then, is the weather

At the end.

*-Cynthia Cruz*

## Radio Swamp

They'll remove your bones while you're asleep,

Put another person's premonitions

Inside you.

Wishes, tremulous horrors: the boy

Who rips the legs off

Daddy long leg spiders.

Little boy Trakl:

Bin ich noch krank, mutti,

Oder bin ich tot?

Dream warp,

The brilliant Doctor Walsh

Showing his film to all the girls in the ward

Of no return:

How once afflicted, one's mind never really comes back.

Childhood locked inside a wire box.

The little children say

They can hear the wars

Up in heaven.

When I awoke from the phone call

That never came

I knew why

God made me.

Father, always, in the dark

A loaded shotgun at his side, before the white

Wild flicker of the television.

Ambassador of the Underworld, and the insane, it's strange

You are here—

Beside me on the porch

In this subterranean, 2:13 a.m. night.

Guardian of grown girls who

Look like boys,

You think I don't remember

How I died.

Ashamed to be.

*-Cynthia Cruz*

**Three A.M.**

I've got my tomahawk, my molotov,  
my gun.

For soon the wolves will come.

And the glass bomb,  
a black clap  
into the shame, death of dawn.

Rat a tat

Rat a tat.

So soon they'll  
shoot at the riff raff.

The slumbering masses  
in handout blankets, pharmed  
for eternal sleep

walk, dream walk,  
don't take off  
the blackout goggles.

A kind of hurricane  
Of the mind.

Ticker tape, hypnotic erasure, chaos  
of accumulation, mindless alienation:

covering in a clutter of trauma, and bottles  
of hundred-dollar pills, cheap wine, and vodka.

In the alleyway, behind  
the apartment houses and brownstones,  
I'm lapping up

junked warm milk,  
the excess, the sweet food of glut, and singing

this riff of defunk, this obsolete  
song in doggerel,  
doggerel.

*-Cynthia Cruz*