

Three Poems by Victor Henry

Cherries in Bed

She places a ripe, red cherry next to her cherry-colored lips and makes a wish. Tonight she will eat them one at a time, or perhaps in clumps. She'll make ex post facto wishes until dawn, give in to proxy pleasures as if she were a virgin on her first date. Since he left her eleven weeks ago, she plays mental movies of her insatiable kisses that will never mug another man. She feasts on their first few weeks in bed, plays both parts in uninhibited sessions of sexual decadence. He swore they'd be together until the cosmos collapsed under the weight of their passion. He said he'd do anything for her. He'd hinted at hard love, guaranteed they'd have children as beautiful as blue-blooded aristocrats. He gave her gifts, promised her the moon like Hollywood actors in old thirties and forties movies. Intuition told her his words were lies, that his game was a façade. After a while, he began nitpicking, carping, finding fault in her behavior, criticizing her over the little things that bothered him. At first he claimed he loved cherries. But later he grew to detest them. In truth, he despised her for eating cherries in bed. On top of that, he hated her perfume, her soap, her nail polish, her lipstick, her mouthwash, each smelling like cherries. She could do nothing right. Flaws flowed from her like red-hot lava. He sniped, snipped, and demeaned her until she sought refuge alone in the bed they swore would launch them toward the next

level of love. From the dark depths of her dream world, she plucks the ripest cherry to celebrate the loss of her love, a gesture so pure that if he were to come back tomorrow, he'd come back as a woman.

Drawn and Quartered

War is a Racket--Major General Smedley D. Butler
(U.S. Marine Corp)

Concerning the current addiction to war
A neo-conservative politician on a Sunday
Talk show says
As we end today's wars
We must prepare for tomorrow's wars.

There'll be efforts to promote organized murder,
Making killing the business of war.
The aging waitress, with no pension plan,
Never fathoms
Fifty-three cents of every dollar goes to the military.

Note how more veterans step into death,
Dying while waiting for Veterans Benefits,
Their VA claim, for some, arriving
After they're dead.
Their soul, making its slow exodus,
Transforming into light.

All Things Considered

Where did he get these directions?
He studies three dimensional maps of the cosmos
As destiny and destination guide him
On blue highways to the numinous.

A few days later I found a clue
In a Lonely Planet travel book,
Places he visited recently to track lines
Of linear thought,
Starting at le commencement de la fin.

Then the other day I thought of him
Concealed at the center of the universe
Mapping his mind with sightless vision,
Unless, of course, he was blindly groping
In the dark.

Victor Henry's work has appeared in various small press magazines and anthologies. He is a film junkie, reads four hours a day, loves all kinds of music, and was raised on the fine arts. He holds two earned master's degrees, enjoys working as a reference librarian, is a Vietnam veteran and a member of Veterans for Peace.