

Carol Hamilton

Communion

Athena presented Athens with olives,
thus the city was named to honor
her agreed-upon wisdom in choosing such a gift.
We stir our times together over a low flame,
and the garlic slices grow pearl-like
in her precious oil, so we begin
to prepare again for the Eucharist of our hours.

How a Grain of Sand Tips the Scales

That ancient rock, exposed there
 as you hope never to be exposed,
waited all this time for your return,
 but all this time
is only a flutter of your lashes
 to the ancient rock
that wears its pitted face
 without apology or shame
or pride or any other word.

Your return only marks time
 on a human scale,
and your shame is bared
 to you alone.
Lichens curl and peel
 on the ancient rock
even as you drive away.
 A cold autumn blue cleanly
washes everything in sight.

Prayer

morning
and mockingbird
is working the air again

his determination cubing
my hours into exactitude

though all that urgency
I left behind
 thank God
 thank mockingbird
thank frog at night
 the pips of sound
 some other romancer
of future
 is making now
 behind this more flashy
 insistence

I will practice my songs soon too
 use them tomorrow night
when we will all join in
 but I will brandish no sword
 of sound
 no wild hope

I sing evening
 now
 all of my recreative tasks
 done

but thank mockingbird
 for desperation

 thank God for dawn

Inundation

Among the seaweed and the dampened sand,
Afraid to move for fear of crushing life
Beneath my steps, I'm crouched and still.
The littered beach calls for the tide.
In silence, my thoughts tune to those
Strange tongues I did not ask to hear,
Yet chorus calls up from that place.
What strange and clicking voices sing,
Cacophony unheard without this pause.

I hold my breath to hear the song arise
From this disoriented litter of the stranded,
A song of mating, hunger, dread, those sounds
Sea life learns within its watery world.
I now call up to unseen stars of day,
My voice is lost and yet as clear, concise,
As those unthinking ones that hover here.
Knowledge, a fungal growth, creeps up
From water, earth and air.

Perhaps an answer pounds within returning waves,
But I prefer to leave the mysteries singing here.

Carol Hamilton has recent publications in *Paper Street*, *Common Ground*, *Louisiana Review*, *Pontiac Review*, *Sanskrit. Poet Lore*, *Limestone*, *Louisiana Literature*, *Off the Coast*, *Palaver*, *O.V.S. Magazine*, *The Aureorean*, *The 3228 Review* and others. She has published 17 books, most recently, *Such Deaths* from the Virtual Arts Cooperative Press in Chicago. She is a former Poet Laureate of Oklahoma and has been nominated seven times for a Pushcart Prize.