

Three Poems by Ellaraine Lockie

Motherhood in Hollywood

In line at Beverly Center Starbucks
A purple double decker stroller pushed by a pair
of double-Ds, baby-pink fishlips and Daisy Dukes
spilling the word PURPLE down one cheek
Arms and legs a shadow of what should be

Another woman asks *Do you have twins*
Oh yes says the mother
Her voice a shiny silk bed sheet
that wraps itself around you
A come-on worthy of platinum hair
and platform sandals with pink satin ankle ties
She reaches for the lavender bone-shaped handle
and unzips the plastic stroller door
Exposing two heads with eyes the size
of quarters on a Golden Globe orb
From the same litter she continues
in a sound that sucks you right in

To where the Chihuahuas lounge
on a lilac angora blanket
smeared with raspberry hearts
and edged in deep plum lamé
Necklaces studded with amethysts
Their mother scoops them up
Places them under her own well-insulated heart
Cuddles them with air kisses and diamond fingers

A gathering of customers listens
when she says, as breathily as Marilyn Monroe
May I introduce to you Tom and Jerry Vanderdog

Then waits for applause that doesn't come
until she bends at the waist in a bow
All of us worried about the little things suffocating

After Meeting Her in Amsterdam

--For the tour guide Madam at the Red Light District

Is she so dissimilar to the wife
who stays deadbolted in loveless wedlock
Both selling the same services for security
when they bump and grind
in expertly executed boredom
One for the harvest her attorney husband yields
The other equally incomeed
but independently cultivating her own clients
in a career lawfully sanctioned
if not quite socially acceptable

Then why care when she tells her story
How some of the seeds she sows
come from boys young enough to be her son
Rich kids from other countries
who get legally looped on local pot
Then come to her to get legally laid
And the others who come
whose washing of private parts
won't wipe away flatulent disrespect
or the rancor of rotting teeth
But she has options the housewife hasn't
Power to impart the rules
To refuse her patrons
A panic button that replaces the pimp
whose price for protection of her kind
in other cultures is possession

Then why care about her career choice when husbands
pack paychecks as part of their baggage
And their wives have no lifework beyond the home
When waitressing won't foster a family of four

But this ex-wife with a covert career
can buy braces, bicycles
and Belgian chocolate for her children
One of whom asked if she was a whore
as she sprinkled his breakfast toast with *hagelslag*
that matched the brown of her bludgeoned eye
A temporary badge of brutal
and perpetual possibilities
When police took a little too long
to answer her panic button alarm

Maybe we care because she can't
Her tears long ago dried up
by a double life that desiccated her soul
Left it defunct like all her aborted fetuses
Conceivably she doesn't cry
because she doesn't feel sad or bad or sorry
Her sympathy saved for the wife
who aborts the baby because
she knows precisely who the father is
He's the one who broke the arm
that forgot to put *hagelslag* on his toast
But that wife's house has no panic button
And humiliation and fear
prop her head high in hypocrisy
as she fabricates a fall down the stairs
Descending into a different form of double life

hagelslag: Chocolate sprinkles specifically for toast

Full Circle

This morning the sun celebrates along with me
the empty driveway next to mine
Shining salvation on the realtor-scrubbed concrete
After years of debasement by oil leaks
urine stains, cigarette butts, empty booze bottles
used condoms and needles
Items disallowed in the halfway house

Gone, the constant flux of strangers
never timeworn into neighbors
in this family circle of dwellings
The rigid neck of fear
as it looked over shoulders
Or straight ahead into a man exposing himself
or a woman wielding a baseball bat

No more visions of shotgun crossfire
from a neighbor's right to self-defend
Or police arriving after the fact
Now a cup of sugar can be borrowed
without pepper spray or cell phone
Butterflies in my belly
have taken residence in the bay tree
Hummingbirds whisper in an acacia
Woodpeckers tap applause for the quiet
Neroli from orange blossoms
fills the air with nature's Valium

Peace once again wafts in and out
of windows and unlocked doors
The poet in me, pen and notebook in hand
walks around and around this cul-de-sac
A planet orbiting its sun
Energy converted into the chain reaction

of thought and words onto paper
And I am an ancient worshiper of the sun
who bows down right here on the pavement
In thanksgiving for the passing of an eclipse

Ellaraine Lockie is a widely published and awarded poet, nonfiction book author and essayist. Her eleventh chapbook, *Where the Meadowlark Sings*, won the 2014 Encircle Publication's Chapbook Contest. Her newest collection, *Love Me Tender in Midlife*, has been released as an internal chapbook in IDES from Silver Birch Press. Other recent work has received the Women's National Book Association's Poetry Prize, Best Individual Collection from *Purple Patch* magazine in England for *Stroking David's Leg* and the San Gabriel Poetry Festival Chapbook Contest winner award for *Red for the Funeral*. Ellaraine teaches poetry workshops and serves as Poetry Editor for the lifestyles magazine, *Lilipoh*.