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Home

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Five Poems · *Margaret Gibson*

HOME

I have lived many lives since in Venice I saw
glass blowers shape to their fragile uses each angry breath.
Now the days come one by one—I predict neither
memory nor future.

Yet I have seen,
one twilight in Moscow, a piece of frozen river
ruffle up into the sky—ice as a pale blue rose
too distant for tether or root. I rubbed my eyes,
and the rose broke apart into whip-lines,
long arcs and Vs—

and I knew they were swans,
perhaps wild geese, in their mass and sheer
movement amazing. Near the bridge where I stood
were skaters. They scored solid ice, their shadows
long behind them, moving into night. Above
and below, the world moved one way.
I have moved with it. That I know.

Where is my home?
My small life has touched lives in Italy, Los Angeles, Mexico,
Moscow, Spain. In them all I see the photograph
Edward took at Tacubaya—I'm sitting in a doorway
dressed in black, in our courtyard facing past a tree
and shadows on the wall. The wind that swept Mexico
is still, the dust is low.

Edward has set his tripod at a distance by the well
where he washes each morning. I dream
sun on the *azotea*, the dark room of a new life—
unaware of the pattern composed as he backs farther
away and stops down to so great a depth of field
that the door goes back into darkness forever.
That dark doorway I call home.

Out on the street, lovers saunter, eating celery.
Azucenas spill from the windows. Churchbells, anvils,
roses ring in a single translation: *Vivid, la vida sigue*,
Live, for life goes on.

None of us has time for a single
life to stun the air as a flower can, fully realized.

Therefore we gather, *en masse*.

DARKROOM NIGHTS

One night in Amecameca's Hotel *Sacro Monte*
I lay awake—the bed hard, the pillows white
with the geranium and stock we put there.
Mountains cold, moon aloof—Edward
shivered as he slept. I couldn't close my eyes.
I watched a chair cast ribs of shadow on the wall.
How well they kept their secrets, I thought—
the things of the world mute, patient.

The bed was a lumpy altar—
I had been worshipped there, lifted out
of myself, by the ecstasy of my specific female
flesh made goddess of the flowers, flush and open.
I was able to stop time, back to the first time
we'd touched—let it be always the first time,
Edward said. Sex is magical thinking—
water burns, flowers dawn in the stones.
The first time, in Glendale, he'd looked at me
first through the camera: an hour's delay,
glance as touch, and finally, finally touch—
a slippery transit, beyond all limits.