

Ann Marie Gamble – Three Poems

Ode to the New Sign in the Ladies

A new, euphemistic sign in the restroom at work.
Ordinarily I disapprove,
but I'm warming to the idea
that blood-soaked rags are feminine.

My teeth tearing open these corset laces
My breast feeding this someday man
My hand stirring goddess knows what into your soup
that I always make in the iron pot
seasoned and cracked
I call the Strega Nonna pot.
“Grandmother Witch” in a language
that understands
we swing
both ways.

So yes, I will dispose of
my feminine products
with great care
so as not to disrupt
your plumbing.

Epilogue

The wedding and a baby
and curtain—happily ever after.

But then there's preschool
and the kid who throws sand
who turns out to be your kid.
Grade school, keeping track of
birthdays, which blocks have dogs
too close to the sidewalk.
Chipped tooth, grandmother's funeral,
which high school, and tests
—always tests—
the antagonist in this story
more inexorable than dogs or mean girls,
steering the plot out of the Ivies
with none of the answers we're looking for.

Studying in the library,
our hero makes eye contact.
Meet cute, complications, resolution,
and another epilogue
that's just the launchpad
of the next part
of the story.

Naptime/Nighttime

1.
He sleeps so hard he looks dead.
Then he sighs,
slides his hand
a little farther down his chest,
unaware of the
seizure of love and fear
he has aroused.

I go back
to folding
the laundry.

2.
I was dreaming
about how comfortable my bed was
 or maybe I was awake
 I'm not sure
when the baby started to cough and cry
 or cry and cough
and even in this state
 wondering whether my bed was real
I knew he could not stop
and I leapt up to go to him
in the dark.

Ann Marie Gamble edits long works for university presses and short pieces at an advertising agency, and has previously published at *Nanoism.net*, *the Tower Journal*, and other venues. Poetry gives her a chance to take a close look at moments, put processes and connections in the foreground.