

Rose Mary Boehm

Certain drawbacks

Some ripe Chinese seed pods
aquarelled to grow along a vine
of sorts are beginning to age
in this merciless southern light.

They used to be a deep, rich
burgundy and have withered to
pale yellow. We bought that
picture in Amsterdam one cold

summer from a shop next to the Chinese
medicine place, right opposite
the famous barely dressed ladies
exhibiting their wares and waiting

for clients while knitting, crocheting
or just idling in red rooms on red,
ornate chairs with not much more
than elaborate garters. I hope

no tropical sun ever bleaches
their assets. The Inka cloths
on the walls have been treated
and survived five hundred years
of misuse. They'll probably

last a little longer. Dead
great-great-great granny was
wrapped in one of them once.
The black wooden Thai frog
has turned a gentle hue of bronze.
Gray's Anatomy is no longer blue.

The Oxford Dictionary lost the battle
and its gold lettering. The *poemarios*
have never been made from stern stuff,
and my first edition of the Grimm
brothers' collection has lost its lustre.
There are still my mother's leather-bounds.
Wonder when they'll give in.

My friend and I went to the beach again.
At the end of the afternoon I return home
shiny, full of life and vitamin D, hoping
my loved one won't notice the wear.

A German-born UK national, **Rose Mary Boehm** lives and works in Lima, Peru. Her novels *Coming Up For Air* and *The Telling*, as well as a collection of poetry, *Tangents* have been published in the UK by Black Leaf Publishing Group. Since then, a number of her recent poems have either been published or are about to be published by mainly US poetry journals/publications: *Burning Word*, *Pale Horse*, *Other Rooms*, *Toe Good*, *Requiem*, *Full of Crow*, *Poetry Breakfast*, *Barefoot Review*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Verse Wisconsin*... Poetry has become her life.