



Jane Williams – Five Poems

The last bridesmaid

Today the park is an unsent postcard,
a wish list of summer color and heat
reflected in the smiles of the newlyweds
circling the duck pond for the perfect
photo shoot.

The last bridesmaid is barefoot -
high heels and bouquet
swing from her hands in sync
with her swinging hips. In another
tale she would be the star attraction.

So when she approaches my bench seat
I try not to stare at the straining
seams of her dress
the pinched big toes
poking through sheer stockings.

And as she passes I imagine
(because the day demands it)
that the last bridesmaid,
designer of her own life is loved
by the tall man in the tweed cap
whose arm she takes when she catches up.

That when they arrive home
he prepares food and a soaking tub
for her feet, later imprinting her body
with his, that he does these things reverently,
grateful that she, goddess of his world,
should see fit to grant this one mortal's wish.

Affirmation

When my cousin had his last
seizure after forty years worth
my aunt and uncle had their final
visit to the home away from home,
their able bodies moving
routinely then uncommonly
to accommodate
a long rehearsed grief.
My aunt as was her wont
turned to God,
her industrious hands
stilled to prayer
clamped one to the other.
My uncle, loyal follower
of the each way bet,
not a church goer -
not for all their bad pennies
but the truest kind of believer
when it came to his wife
spoke plainly so intent
could not be misunderstood
for anything but love.
My Maura's got her faith
he said
And I've got my Maura
beyond talk and grand gesture
simple affirmation -
what more?

Footage

A description of amateur photography
at its keenest; footage shot by the driver
behind the one shot dead.

The broadcaster's tone is caught
between abhorring the act and
applauding the art.

It's sooo...it almost puts you there.

Are we blindsided by this fractured sentence,
by the omitted adjective; *sooo* ...what?
Vivid? Authentic? Lifelike?

Can we imagine the car door opening
and a man's head emerging mollusc-like
only less instinctual more complacent

rising for a better look perhaps
at what's holding up the traffic
hoping to make an impact on its inevitable flow.

For another man the wait over.
Trigger finger spent. Or again in slow motion -
the whining sound of the bullet in-transit,
the blockbuster spray of blood.

Are we watching and listening still
on the sidelines of our own lives
in danger of being glitched into pure fiction?

Flashback

Today the man came
to check the smoke alarms
and their high pitched warning
reached back:

To the night my sleep-talking sister
caught in the milieu of childhood nightmare
screamed down the burning house.

To the countless times I've burned
the dinner to ash, boiled the water dry,
distracted by some tantalising
undomesticated train of thought.

Or bushwalking, detected smoke on the air
at the wrong time of year
and envied the secret life of pyromaniacs.

To the friction our lovemaking bodies create
in their efforts to reunite us - to remember
to never forget - that first empyreal flash.

Vows

We'll never marry but once
after an argument about nothing
we would remember the next day
you sat in the dark on the edge
of a hotel room bed on the 55th floor
while I tossed coins at elevator doors
waiting for a sign.
We caught ourselves before the nothing set in,
remembered who we are together –
not Heloise and Abelard, not Tristan and Isolde
but still the first and last of our kind.
We vowed to keep returning. To never turn away.
To introduce ourselves each morning
of the rest of our lives. It was a perfect day.
You said *I hate it when we're that
divorced from one another don't you?*
and I said *I do.*

Jane Williams is an award winning Australian poet. Her most recent collection is *Days Like These - new and selected poems*. She lives in Tasmania with her partner Ralph Wessman. Further samples of her work can be found at www.janewilliams.wordpress.com