

Mike Amado (1975-2009) - Three Poems

She Who Gave Me Words

Mother is a mystery.
She styled her hair herself; even after
two kids.
She would sway her neck when a man
gave her a compliment,
a demure giggle, intentional coolness.
She walked me to school on that first day
wearing an orange miniskirt
and a psychedelic blouse.
I've seen Polaroid's of her from the 50s,
in a poodle skirt and flowing hair.
Almost a "white girl" easily Cape Verdean.
She a consistent mystery.
I issued from this woman,
pale-olive from coffee-brown.
She wrote poetry in high school.
She showed me words were Play-Do
and can shape worlds.
She taught me to read the Lord's prayer,
one night, the Saturday before Easter.
That thin sheet of paper
on a table cloth of pastel flowers.
Sitting in the kitchen, after dinner,
her voice the voice of God.

Every Day Is Wash Day

Washtub is a deep sink
filled with suds, blue water.

Blue jeans and T-shirts from two kids,
three bakery uniforms
and one blouse and pair of pants.

The scent of washing-soap floats
over the aroma of breakfast.

Always scrubbing.

The sun reaches the kitchen
window by late morning.
Unfolding on the floor of
green and white diamonds
like a blanket.

Still scrubbing.
Every day, I saw her scrub
from kindergarten until I moved out.

There are some things that
you can't clean.
The world will always roll in dirt.

As long as our clothes were scented
with Jergen's we shone
like diamonds.

In the Beginning

I slept in a crib until I grew out of it.
My older sister slept in her own room.
Mine was the living room, the room
that my nana trained us to call a "parlor."
I would send myself to dream
seeing flecks of brain chemical colors
that mimicked the wallpaper
in my sleepy head, as it rested on the pillow
just underneath a picture of cats on a fence.

I hated school. If I was a Viking,
every grade would've been razed.
I didn't like wearing new pants for
the first day. They came from the
"irregular" store, every item a mark-down.
How that starchy, un-broken-in fabric made me itch.

I learned to learn on my own.
My young mind was a chalk board
full of the cartography of a world that forgot
inner wisdom.
Every time I fell asleep, I was wide awake
and my soul grew like a giant. When I awoke,
I came back to a sicker body, forgotten

in a world that yawned when it spoke.
That's why I turned to the drums:
That kept me awake.

I was often sick. But my illness
waited for me in "the future."
Doctors, with thumbs in their mouths,
goo-goo-ga-ga-ing like suicidal baby dolls.
Drumming and words were my healing.
The unerasable spray paint.
The balm for my spirit.

Mike Amado [1975-2009] was co-founder of two poetry venues in his hometown of Plymouth, MA, "Poetry Showcase" a yearly event and "POETRY: The Art of Words" a monthly event. Mike published three books of poetry during short lifetime, his poems have appeared in numerous on-line and printed issues of poetry over the years. He also appeared as the feature poet at 16 venues throughout eastern Massachusetts . His poetry reviews have appeared in various places including Doug Holder's *Boston Small Press and Poetry Scene*.

The Book of Arrows, recently released by Cervena Barva Press, is his fourth book of poetry. The poems above are from this book. It was co-edited by Jack Scully, his literary executor and Nancy Brady Cunningham. The book is available from the Cervena Barva Press at <http://www.cervenabarvapress.com/>