

Harris Gardner – Five Poems *Feature*



That Now I See

Always had a sense that life looked different.
Myopia was misery's flagrant accomplice.
All the world was viewed as a blank page.
Zebras, even, were stripped of their stripes.
I could not read, sans lenses, features in a greeting.
Newspaper headlines blended to neutral.
God bless all-seeing contacts!

Give praise to God and modern medicine.
Rapturous visions replace left eye cataract.
Awesome clarity fills my modified eye.
Colors have peeled back their veils.
Ecstasy infuses my eye's palette.

Tempting sky canvas calls to fanciful flight.
Heaven's constellations startle my nights.
Abstract art reveals fine-tuned details.
Trumpet hosannas for Creation's first day.

Nature's robe is festooned in radiant gems.
Oracular eye predicts unceasing sun.
Wondrous beauty seen before cloaked in gray.
Impassioned eye feasts on all hues of green and blue.

Sight will not sate the soul until the last two coins.
Ether's whirling display mints mere hints.
Eternity's parted layers endow a final insight.

Peanut Butter

“I have eaten the plums
That were in the icebox”

*From: “This Is Just To Say” -
by Wm.. Carlos Williams*

I borrowed the peanut butter
From your kitchen cabinet.
Two slices of Fiber +Cal
Fled to me from your Refrigerator.
Your marshmallow fluff

Was tempting; but I refused
To be a cruel guest who would
Scrape the bottom of the jar;
So, I opened your fresh container
Of jam. I only took enough
From the top,
Just a little that you would not
Notice or miss.
Thank you so much.
It was delicious.

More than that,
It returned me to my childhood,
To my parents’ house not far
From the sound of the ocean.
My mind wandered back to those joys;
However, not long enough to get lost
In the past. Your bottle of pinot noir
Sang to me in a voice
That invited a symphony.
I longed to test the nose.
Thinking of the bouquet
That the label promised,
I regretted that I did not
Bring you an arrangement.
I passed no ATM on the way.
I knew that a five dollar bunch
Bought at the train station
Was beneath both of us.

Next time, I swear to bring roses
Which always conjure your image
In my thoughts.
Sadly, this moment, this day

Will turn to dust
As eventually, in the fullness
Of whatever year, I must, too;
But, for now, I can only wonder
As I diligently search,
Where o you keep your
Enticing cork screw?

When Answers Chase Their Tails

“If you can keep your head when
Those about you are losing theirs...”
Rudyard Kipling

Say that the ocean’s murmuring voice
Reveals mysteries.
Say that the mountains leap-
Or, do they tremble
When plates rattle on the shelf?
Say that the trees bow in reverence
Before the words of primal wind.
Say that death visits you in dreams.
Say that you refuse to take the first step
On the journey that never ends-
Except, you do when you first kick
And scream your entrance into life.
Say that you won’t dance on graves
Of the wicked; although,
The temptation is strong.

Say that the world wobbles
Because humanity is out of balance.
Say that your design is righteous,
But you can’t cure every wrong.
Say that the first step to heal
The planet is to plant a tree or seed.
One benevolent act begets another.
Say that you need to nurture your neighbor
Even if half the globe disagrees.
Say that mortal conflict creates new rivers.
When their waters recede back to their banks,
New gravestones raise their dripping heads
To inquire about the dead.

Say that life has many doors and knocks.

You're blameless half the time, with a little luck.
Don't get stuck in the muck with others' rebuke.
Say that you have options- except when you don't:
Roads with roses, paths with thorns. Sometimes both.
Say that they should select the door that hides the lady;
Avoid the tiger that grumbles on an empty stomach
And dreams of a full belly. You want the door on the right.

In Principio

"In the beginning was the Word."
Not that, what, or which one.
Nobody was there to hear;
So, any opinion ventured would be
Pure conjecture. Such an adventure,
To unravel that earliest mystery!

Myriad stories and histories were woven
Every era, both oral and written versions,
With facts chosen to fit each form. The formula,
Frequently a somewhat familiar recipe.
Many efforts ensued to perfect the norm.
With few primary resources, this became
An absurd pursuit, a blue ribbon exercise in futility.
Pyramids grew; clay tablets nearly caused a feud.

Empires rose and crumbled in search of the Word.
Crusades were fought in the name of the source.
The search marched with horns and banners,
All manner of alarms and arms in the name of revelation
Spiritual journeys zig-zagged the horizon.
Seers and sages were imbued with visions.
Prophets rose and declined defining the WORD.

Word began with the; then expanded into dictionaries.
Veiled clues in those pages- perhaps hidden in plain view,
Surrounded by a surfeit of surreptitious suggestions.
Possibilities- many, probable- few, if any.
What word, so potent, could birth all creation
An exhalation: Spirit, Man; back to Spirit.
Back to "In the beginning": Word may be sound.
Perhaps it is inside the aaah, or perhaps the om;
Another option: seek it in the amen.

Pass This Way Another Day

“I could not stop for death...”

- Emily Dickenson

I set my watch twenty minutes fast
To be consistent with my rounds;
Perhaps, too, it may confuse the chauffeur
Who cruises in the black limousine.
He makes a U-turn to double check
Addresses and his infernal calendar.

I peek out behind half-closed blinds.
My “shoo, shoo” is a charm against the day

The cuckoo dreams in black and white;
Flecks peel from its painted body.
I sip my mango margarita, savor every drop;

Celebrate life for yet another summer.
Perhaps sunglasses help my youthful disguise.
Hopefully, my fate is not a chiseled date.
No rush, I can wait even if I’m late.
Pass by, Dark Harvester. Do what you must;
But, as for me, just pass.

Harris Gardner’s credits are: *The Harvard Review*; *A Poet’s Siddur*; *Midstream*; *Cool Plums*; *Rosebud*; *Fulcrum*; *Chest*; *The Aurorean*; *Ibbetson Street Journal*; *Constellations (#6 and # 7)*; *Main Street Rag*; *Vallum* (Canada); *Levure Litteraire* (France, US and Germany); *Green Door* (Belgium) and about fifty other publication credits. Co-authored with Lainie Senechal: *Chalice of Eros*, 1998; his next collection: *Lest They Become* (Ibbetson Street Press) 2003. *Among Us* (Cervena Barva Press) 2007. Co-founder of Tapestry of Voices with Lainie Senechal (1999-Pres.) Co- founder, with Lainie Senechal, Boston National Poetry Month Festival, 2001 to the present; Co-founder (with Doug Holder) Breaking Bagels with the Bards, 2005-present; Poet-in-Residence, Endicott College, 2002 –April, 2005. Nominated for Pushcart Prize, Honorable Mention-Boyle-Farber Prize (New England Poetry Club) Poetry Editor for *Ibbetson Street*- July, 2010 – present Member of five selection committees for Poet Laureate: Boston (3); Somerville (2) Ibbetson Street Press Life Time Achievement Award- 2015, Citation from Massachusetts House of Representatives- 2015.