



Janice Silverman Rebibo – 5 Poems

Caught in the Birth Canal

He will have to do –
to represent
all there is.

He is caught again –
this time
with his suitcase
stuck in a
revolving door.

In an instant Elizabeth assesses
his outward form
and the meaning
of his expression
as he glances back at her
over his shoulder.

Miraculously, once again
he extricates himself with one swift jerk
of his arm, delivering
him and his suitcase, whole,
from that
narrow
place
into the open air without emitting even the one
audible syllable of disgust Elizabeth expects.

Amy's Troubadour

He intentionally
acquired unfamiliar skills.
None of his kin had access to
his areas of expertise, and Amy
says she's sure they did not talk
the way he grew to talk, in his
adopted twang. It was how
the guitar music of his
soul rolled out
one morning,
wandering – he must
have known that he would
capture hearts. He had it in him
to romance her. He was the one-man-
band that rattled Amy's walls, kept
her empty and dreaming, awaiting
his vagabond footsteps whenever
the record stopped turning.

Elegy for Julie's Undefined Lost Object

When Julie was thirteen, she had to look up the word
elegiac. Today she is looking
him
up
the man who defines her as also a friend. Although
he is not irretrievably lost – after all,
she just caught him
on the phone on the runway about to take off for
South America. After two years of therapy and
after asking him outright last month and hearing
a mutual acquaintance hold forth yesterday over
cups of mint tea and just now after viewing his
video clip, Julie has cracked the code: For all but
the usual handful of months after they first met
in person in a sunlit lobby, she had no idea
of who he was. He had skipped out and nobody
was the wiser. Her dictionary definition of him
had become obsolete.
On the day that clip was shot, for example,
he was already totally elsewhere
though he scanned her top to bottom

flirtatiously
right down to her platform sandals.
Her suspicions could not be proven. Her misgivings
were hypothetical. In the meantime he loved and he
suffered unbeknownst to Julie. She lacked the information
a friend needs by definition: "a person known well
by another". Unless it's enough that he
knows
her
and that Julie is defined by her lack of knowledge of him.

JAWS

"The verything I don't
like about him
is what I like about
him," said Elinor.
"The verything that makes
me want to end it is
what tempts me
to keep it going. The
instant he traps me in a vise
I know that I have always
had a predilection for vises.
Being trapped in a vise
is a transformative experience.
When I'm trapped I learn
that I must have always
liked being trapped."

Christiana's Simile

"Recently it dawned on me
that I tend not to notice loving
gestures when I'm distracted
by thoughts of other loving
gestures that I'm expecting.
My heart is like a Geiger
counter that amplifies
the tiniest particles
of what is not there
and fails to detect what is."

Janice Silverman Rebibo's poetry has been widely published and reviewed since she was first launched into print by esteemed Israeli poet, Chaim Gouri. Her English language poetry has been called "fresh and compelling", having "an intriguing sense of humor", and showing "just how globally oriented the world has become". About her most recent chapbook, *How Many Edens*, reviewer Amos Lassen wrote, "It does not happen often that I read a book that hits me emotionally like this did...." Editor and poet Amos Levitan called these poems "regal and mysterious, emanating from an authoritative and precisely controlled flow of rhetorical energy". Rebibo is the author of six books of poetry and a volume of translations to English of the selected work of popular Israeli poet Natan Yonatan. The title poem of *My Beautiful Ballooning Heart*, her collected English poetry, was nominated by Muddy River Poetry Review for a 2012 Pushcart Prize. A Massachusetts native and native English speaker, Rebibo received a 2007 President of Israel award and others for her collected Hebrew poems, *Zara Betzion [a stranger-woman in Zion]*. Israeli critics have described her Hebrew poetry as "endearingly sensitive and syncopated", "a bold blend of two imposing literary traditions", "cosmopolitan – not mired in any local swamp", and "a strategic breakthrough that added something new to the war of independence of Israel's consciousness. For more details, please visit www.janicerebibo.com