



## **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](http://www.janicerebibo.com)