

## Krikor N. Der Hohannesian - Three Poems

### A Herding

Picture droves of fattened cattle,  
mindless sheep driven  
over dust-stormed plains  
a stockyard rendezvous,  
the butcher's blade – roasts, steaks,  
chops for Sunday dinner  
on a distant plate. Today,

I missed the 2:10 out of Boston –  
time to kill, the sound of braying  
from the wrong side of the chain-link.  
A small herd mills - ponderous,  
crusty pachyderms penned  
in the corral of a vacant parking lot.  
Nobody's future supper, only grist  
for low humor from passersby, screams  
of glee from a gaggle of children  
tugging at mother's skirt. Eyes lidded

the elephants seem bored, lugubrious –  
I half-expect their tears. No African savannah,  
this – blacktop pocked with random piles,  
gray and glacial New England moraine,  
an ersatz biosphere. Desultory prods  
of trunks scent nothing familiar,  
scoop the grit, toss it skyward  
in majestic dusty swoops. A pair

shuffle toward the fence – one unloads  
a cataract of urine, the other thuds the macadam  
with turds the size of bocci balls. Their trunk tips  
nuzzle in affectionate ritual. With Haitian lilt  
the roustabout shoos them back, shovels the dung  
into a wheelbarrow tarred black with dried shit. Ah,  
Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey - back in town!

## **At The Edge Of The Cliff**

I.

Once I wandered the desert,  
tumbleweed loose in the wind,  
seduced by the promise of mirage,  
slake to a thirst with no end.

II.

I have stood by the forest's edge  
after the fire, a doe's flesh  
still smoldering, buzzards  
eager at the leavings,  
white-hot with fury at the gods.

III.

I tilled love's garden,  
sowed it with hope, reaped  
the blackened fruit of dismay  
still damp with my tears.

IV.

I walked the shore  
shrouded in fog,  
its gentle dew of tears,  
turning stones, shells  
groping for the reason,  
any reason.

V.

I stand here now,  
here at the edge of the cliff,  
watching petrels, gulls, terns  
soar and swoop, their sky infinite  
with possibility, and I, tempted  
by the surf's crash against  
weathered granite far below.

## **Demolition**

a hammer,  
a cold chisel,  
two hands

brick by brick  
nail by nail  
stud by stud  
beam by beam

this safe haven I built,  
where sadness weeps  
where rage burns  
where love suffocates  
in fetid air, this prison  
no more. I will stand

naked, bathed in the sweat  
of my labors, free  
to breathe again,  
free to reach for the sun,  
to curl with the crescent moon  
rocked in peaceful sleep.

**Krikor N. Der Hohannesian** has been writing poetry for some 40 years and has had poems accepted by many literary journals including *The Evansville Review*, *The South Carolina Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Peregrine*, *Connecticut Review* and *Hawai'i Pacific Review*. In addition, Finishing Line Press selected his chapbook, *Ghosts and Whispers* for publication in December, 2010. He serves as Assistant Treasurer of the New England Poetry Club and also received honorable mention for NEPC's Gretchen Warren Award for best published poem by a member in 2010.