

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.