

## Patricia Gomes – Five Poems



### *Featured Poet*

## **Alarmed**

Throughout her life, she's kept a clock in every room.  
She lives by the stroke of the hour,  
never wavering  
from her self-imposed schedule. This  
is done at this time, that  
is done on the half-hour, the other  
on the quarter-hour.  
Lunch, no matter where,  
no matter with whom,  
or what day,  
is always at noon.

No one blinks  
when she adds a second clock  
to the living room, but they question  
the addition of a third, then smile  
indulgently and pat her gray hair  
as she claims she can see the third better  
than the other two.

This is her Winter, and now there are four.  
Four clocks in one room.  
Time marches on: up, down, sideways, wherever  
she looks. She's become a hoarder  
of seconds.  
As if by always watching,  
she can keep them all.  
Every second of every day. Holding them tightly  
in a spotted and wrinkled fist,  
staving off the inevitable.

## **Lili of the Sparkling Eyes / Lili at Four**

I'm content;  
she still asks my opinions.  
"I like the pink headband best,"  
I say in the most serious of voices.  
"It looks stunning with your dark hair."  
Skinny legs and scabby knees,  
her posture changes, straightens, lengthens.  
Her chin lifts; her confidence rises  
from underneath her purple puppy tee shirt.  
She is a torera, La Matadora  
standing before her Bull, listening  
to the crowd shout her name.

## **Basic Skills**

I read lines  
of love poems  
between the claws  
of a sacred black cat  
as I inspected them  
for spider legs and shallow clues  
to any remaining sanctuary  
I missed on this first trip  
around the galaxy.  
The poetry saved me  
from hunger,  
freed the cat,  
brought world peace,  
then made tracks of its own  
for optimistic shell gathers  
to chase.

## **Using What I Have, as You Advised #1**

Loose ends are inescapable.  
Tangles, knots, frayed edges  
are a certainty  
where all else is uncertain.  
Belts, sashes, ropes  
and I'm persistently thirteen strings away  
from Unglued  
at any time  
in all directions,  
facing the onslaught of Yellow.  
Yellow coursing like lava, yellow,

the color of autumn leaves and ratty washcloths,  
industrial bathroom stalls and dinner plates in Hell  
Thirteen lousy strings  
away from superstition  
when all that's left *is* superstition.  
Chants and prayers,  
prayers and charms,  
charms and crystals  
that solve nothing, mean nothing  
until Yellow coats my vision, freezing  
my eyelashes to my face  
in the throes of abstract conjunctivitis.  
This is what I have, and this  
is where the madness lies;  
the capitalization of the y  
in Yellow, the insanity  
that allows the moon to bloat and fall  
onto city blocks of abandoned factories,  
row-after-row, setting them ablaze  
as oceans overflow,  
turning the whole mess to ice:  
hard, frigid, glassy.  
Glacial walls that can't be scaled,  
but they must be scaled  
because I'm late again.

Always

late.

Dead uncles shake their rotting heads  
in my direction and all I can offer  
is empathy because I get it,  
but this *is* what I have:  
loose ends, tangles, knots, and frayed edges.  
All are certain  
where everything is uncertain.  
Belts, sashes, and ropes in abundance  
where I'm persistently thirteen strings away  
from coming unglued  
at any time  
in all directions.

## Clearing Winter's Leavings

It was the unexpected lullaby  
of a fat, lazy bee that did me in.  
Morning chaotic, I sat down to breathe.  
Orange tea at the ready, the warmth from the cup blanketed  
the turbulence of clanking hoes, rakes, pruners,  
blood and Band-Aids.  
I watched the bee's languid weave  
pass the pear sapling in Sam's yard.  
In and out, up and down, to and fro ....  
an inescapable rhythm orchestrated  
for the benefit of this one gardener.  
And when the bee—who by this time I named Humbert—  
finally settled on the thick, emerald leaves of Sam's remaining winter kale  
to take his final bow,

I dozed.

Currently the Poet Laureate of New Bedford, Massachusetts, **Patricia Gomes** is former editor of *Adagio Verse Quarterly*. Published in numerous literary journals and anthologies, both in print and electronically, Ms. Gomes is the author of four chapbooks and a 2008 Pushcart Prize nominee. Ms. Gomes is the co-founder of the GNB Writers Block as well a member of the New England Horror Writers Association, the Massachusetts Poetry Society, the Bartleby Scrivener Poetry Group, and the SciFi Poetry Association.