

Rose Mary Boehm -- Three Poems

While I prepare lunch, my lover sulks

He's been clouding over for a couple
of days now. If only the storm were breaking.
I am 45 and fed up.

While I am cubing the onions he opens
another beer. I wipe my nose and cheeks
with the back of my hand. More weeping.

Attacking the tomatoes I'm beginning
to feel in control. I stick my sharpest
knife into the belly of the mackerel
and slice through muscle and skin.

My face is distorted in the bowl
of crimson water. My hand slides
into that silver body, empties
it of all life. When I feel his breath
in my neck I turn.

Knife in my bloody hands
I am ready to excise the boil.

The woman who won't take a lover

The afternoon slowly trickles between
her spread fingers, over her forehead,
into her closed eyes. She lets herself sink
to the floor, onto her knees.
Hard wood, splinters, rusty nails
mark her flesh.

An insect buzzes, thuds against
the dirty window pane.
Today she feels equally
trapped. No wings or vision.
Dust motes settle.
She is still.
Head bent.
From the park children's summer voices.
A goldfinch in the nearby pine.
The clock's pendulum's familiar rhythm.

Nothing has her attention
except the swelling of her lust.
Barbed wire cuts into her upper thigh.
A drop of blood congeals.

Sweet revenge

You were the cast-out. Wrong.
You had lice once. They shaved your hair.
Even your name was off. Who the hell
called their daughter Noelia?

Your clothes came from the church sales.
We snickered. They used to be ours. Your
baby sister had a permanently snotty nose.
No-one came to your graduation and under
that gown your stockings had ladders. We gloated.
The years passed and we forgot.

I so badly wanted that job and thought long
and hard how I would market myself, about
the resume with its slightly dusted truths.
Of course they'd call me for an interview.

One last look at my reflection in that plate
glass door confirmed my perfect grooming.
I didn't recognize you at first, Noelia. After all,
I'd never bothered to remember your face. You played
me like a virtuoso, and then your masterstroke:
you hired me.

A German-born United Kingdom national, **Rose Mary Boehm** lives and works in Lima, Peru. Author of two novels and a poetry collection, *Tangents*, published in 2011 in the United Kingdom. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in two dozen United States poetry reviews as well as some print anthologies, and Diane Lockward's *The Crafty Poet*. She won third prize in in the 2009 Margaret Reid Poetry Contest for Traditional Verse (US), was semi-finalist in the Naugatuck River Review contest 2012/13. Boehm has been a finalist in several Goodreads contests, winning it in October 2014.

