



## **Karen Neuberg – Five Poems**

### **The Evening Sky Held Hesitation**

And what went still  
as sky was turning  
was all behind me

sifting from a sieve filled  
with years. What had been  
lovely now poured down

into dusk's remaining light  
opening pathways  
back into my own

story, where I paused, unsure  
whether to step, even  
as I ached to let it touch me.

### **Companion**

Doesn't swing me  
along, doesn't wrap or warp;

doesn't take my hand  
then drop it.

Comes from around  
the corner, then straight

into me, from me, a breath  
of arrival, already here. Whispers

what pours from the soul  
of the world, those parts

under stones, on the silver  
side leaf shows to rain,

the rain itself.

## **Private**

Clinks in the drawer with the cutlery.  
Can cut. Or dish it out, leaving  
you too full

or too empty. Softened over time,  
a melted, stinky cheese the maggots  
swirl upon

and you stay out of that room, and you,  
without full awareness,  
use martial arts

to keep it away. As though it's labeled  
*Private* and not yours at all,  
and even if it is,

you won't lend yourself a hand  
to lift it, even just  
to have a peek.

## **Quality**

No real need to enumerate  
as you take your next breath  
and then exhale.

But, just for starters: diesel, formaldehyde,  
benzene, particulate matter, ground-  
level ozone...

Earth is round and currents travel  
around. What blows will reach  
everywhere.

And we haven't even talked about  
what's happening to our waters —

## Aplomb

In these damn dreams,  
your house is always an imposing two-story,

squarish in form, set at an angle  
so it has the feel of a ship's prow

rising as we stand outside, having just been  
inside, having just come out. This time

we're discussing insurance and I'm trying  
to not be confused

about why I'm here again. Later, on a train  
taking us to a somewhere we both agree on,

we stand leaning against a vestibule partition, backs  
away from one another, me, at least, pretending

nonchalance, though I'm betting almost anything  
you are too.

**Karen Neuberg** is the author of two chapbooks, *Myself Taking Stage* (Finishing Line Press) and *Detailed Still* (Poets Wear Prada). Her poems have recently appeared or are forthcoming in *Fractal*, *Hermeneutic Chaos Literary Journal*, *Marathon Review*, and *Tinderbox*, among others. She lives in Brooklyn, NY, holds an MFA from the New School, and is associate editor of the on-line poetry journal, *First Literary Review-East*. Links to more of her work can be found at [karenneuberg@blogspot.com](mailto:karenneuberg@blogspot.com)