



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 Neuberger 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 karenneuberger@blogspot.com