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# Odessa

M. R. Doty

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## After the Ballet / Howard Moss

*Saratoga Springs, July 4*

Where do the dancers go after dancing,  
The tumult of the action slowly fading,  
Asterisk, bulb, and incandescent  
Roman candle rushing into starlight?  
Where do the watchers go after dancing,  
The crowds of people dim in the stage light?  
The rockets of celebration wildly  
Flare for a moment, dangle, and darken.

## Monogamy / Ira Sadoff

Imagine sleeping in the same bed  
with another woman. Any woman.  
Think of losing sight of all  
perspective, the bed tilting  
over like an ocean liner,  
the horizon sliding out the window  
like a sheet of glass. What if your wife  
left you tomorrow? Who would you have  
to tell about your wonderful experience?  
What if you never lose this need  
for sleep? All night you cannot speak—  
something is going on in everybody  
else's room tonight, the bedsprings  
heating up like coils on the stove,  
a whole way of life going up  
in a mattress. And you are there  
and there and there and there.

## Odessa / M. R. Doty

The wheels the carts  
in Odessa are black the stones  
on the beach are black

Odessa the rags full of blood  
the soldiers are all home their  
bootheels click in the snow

Odessa so much is lost  
the candles the spot of blood in the egg  
the pale leaves

Odessa the ships  
come in when the last smoke  
goes out into space  
from the last tongue Odessa  
the ships come in

And the wheelbarrows  
wheel down to the sea  
the stones are black the canals  
are dirty your face shines in the oil  
and the sisters look down  
where their faces should be

Black canals  
black batteries  
rusting in saltwater  
and the dark churches swim  
up through the water

Odessa the long vigil begins  
the votaries are black and shining

The wheelbarrows are nearly there

On the beach  
the charred wrists  
the silver

Odessa the river  
the sirens are blowing

Odessa the hand in the rafters