

John's Thin Arms

John's thin arms  
 find his  
 dog  
 encircle quickened  
 warm smelly hairy animal  
 to hug.  
 Hours upon hours his  
 mother says he  
 hugs his  
 dog he  
 can't get  
 enough she  
 says.

Those Strawberries

Those strawberries  
 I  
 can't even eat.  
 that makes me sad  
 for they are  
 large  
 dark bright red and  
 on my plate.  
 to taste the pleasure  
 of these three  
 would crowd the others  
 in my gut.  
 I would hurt physically.  
 So I shall sip my coffee  
 probably leave  
 my milk too  
 smoke a cigarette  
 (I don't inhale)  
 and stay awhile  
 in this corner  
 facing the corner  
 and let the other people  
 look if they want to  
 at my back at  
 my hair down the gold  
 sweater  
 at this woman alone  
 writing  
 in a 15¢ Spiral  
 in a cheap restaurant.

-- LaDonna Brulé

Lincoln, NB

Dr. Farsdale

After the divorce, when Dr. Farsdale moved  
 into the colonial mansion on the corner,  
 he went right on healing ills and wounds  
 and kept the hedges and the lawns in order,

repainted everything until it shone  
 green shuttered and whitely antiseptic--  
 one day we saw him carry in his arms,  
 out of the street, a bleeding epileptic--

and he was always friendly and polite,  
 Samaritan to any neighborhood,  
 respectful and respected, but one night  
 showed a different side of doing good.

"His house," I overheard my mother phone,  
"was all lit up like Christmas in mid-June--"  
I'd noticed her at windows, looking out.  
"--that Filipino houseboy--" she went on--

"a wild party--drunk, naked men--  
at least they could have pulled the drapes shut tight,"  
behind the horror in her moral tone  
hennaed envy peeking through the blind.

Athena May Applewaite

Arthritic in a wheelchair  
beside a vase of Ming,  
she spoke of Roman noses--  
she loved the noble thing.

A stone bust she had sculptured--  
her father--stood behind,  
dreaming on a pedestal  
where she had placed the mind.

"I had to give up carving--  
my hands--and start on poems--"  
Beyond the window, orange trees  
shone brilliant with starred blooms.

"But found a form that was the same  
in words as well as stone--  
there is a form to everything--  
some day it will be known."

The white cat leaped from her lap  
and pinkly flicked at fleas.  
She wheeled and plucked a book  
and held it on her knees

and read a poem about  
owls, I think it was--  
her white hair like a helmet  
shining in the sun.

She could have been Athene,  
ancient, and still wise--  
but nothing in her poem  
touched us like her eyes.

-- Harold Witt

Orinda, CA