

glema Holloway

THE STAR SALESMAN

You must forgive my flippant prose style,
It's native to this territory's scene
Like mini-calculators, cabs and booze.

I sprawl the king-size hotel bed and stare:
My all-wool alter ego hangs alert,
Fresh-pressed and waiting for the morning's cue.
My forty dollar name-designer tie
Most likely has a spot that must be sponged
Before I sleep. My Gucci shoes are shined
For each rehearsed approach. But there's no role
For sweet success tomorrow. Or next week.

A dozen times a month I play this lead,
Instead of hotdogs, dine on haute cuisine.
The bottom line is: (don't you hate that line)
Our customers aren't clapping for our number.
However primped and powdered or threadbare
They make it sound, their script says NO, a word
Of lead and ice that lodges in soft parts
Beneath my vest, attacking gourmet spoils.
(I'm sure you note the comic undertones
That permeate this neo-classic farce.)

Still, I provide expected locomotion
For this fine costume to complete the plot,
To make the entrance and escort the client
To lunch, silk lining iridescent wit,
Lapels well tailored with sincerity,
Pants creased with confidence. Bright anecdotes
Emerge from pockets, practiced protocol
And uptown jokes, a little charge card magic--
Then when the show plays out, the wound-up mime
Propels the props to yesterday's airport.
And there this woven retinue, almost
Adept enough to give its own performance
Will go inanimate back in the plane,
At last unfolding in home's terminal
To wait in line in Ma Bell's crowded alley,
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Directors of these high-camp one-act flops--
And maybe learn I don't still head the cast.

Glenna Holloway

CHICAGO: FIRST LADY OF THE LAKE

She moved leanly through Indian twilight,
shabby and unmet, slogging through swamps,
trailing her long skirts over skunk cabbage
and mud. She stumbled on shores that bullied her
with dares and promises none of the others heard.

She lay on the flats in bosomy youth, gazing
blueward— high hollow blue, pale-seamed
with wet blue, cerulean and grayed indigo—
seasoned shades priming the canvas
waiting for a subject, waiting

for her to quiet her urgent hunger, waiting
for her to find a wintersmith husband and breed
a breed taller and stubberner than the emptiness.
She drew a line in the black dirt,
she, without first-glance beauty,
without dowry or lineage—a razorish termagant
on Tuesday, demure as dimity on Wednesday,
racy as red sequins on Saturday,
Sunday-caring through the long rains
gone white and heavy on her head, an enigma—
fine figure, unfathomable sum.

After her wedding for better and worse,
feast and fire, splinter and gilt,
she took her time with the art of ladyhood,
more earned than learned,
roughing-in with charcoal,
handling mixture and brushes her way,
using the flattering, fuming, prodding blues
waiting for their match, icing and steaming,
waiting for her to model her rising brood
with the back of her hand,
to teach them to pose substance on air and water,
add the warm colors to the palette, and at last
to put in perspective millions of highlights
framing the time-stretched palimpsest of azure.

Baobab means upside down in Swahili

Glenca Holloway

AN AFRICAN SYNOPSIS: THE BAOBAB TREE

Morning:

A ragged inkblot against the sun
erupts like a geyser into crazed sky.
Zigzag in slow motion
a black quill
returns to tangled branches of calligraphy.
Limned roots that grew bark
and aspired to heaven
lurch upward to await the twilight embrace
of winged exclamations who won it.

Afternoon:

Berserk lines on vellum glare
spell an ancient theme
of heathen heat blanching the horizon.
Daily elephants edit details;
warped shade smudges lion printing.

Evening:

Reunited on the moon's page
birds and boughs compose
cryptic verses of silence
rising above
the voices of the veldt howling hunger.

48 B

ERINIA

She was wise-warm in the eyes
although blue is a cool color.
I recall how her eyes turned cobalt
and live embers on coal-smoke evenings,
how they brimmed with Christmas year-round.
I remember clear cerulean on apple-crunch mornings
when north winds forgot to blow.
Her eyes were country cures—
not the old wives' tales of Amy's or Vi's,
squintish and skimpy, faded ash smudges
for irises. Erinia's thicket of lashes
defied the ages stored beneath,
but if you made a study, you knew
those indigo shadows were old as change or sorrow,
holding where we were and where we were going,
steady stakes for my wild tendrils,
endless emollient for my pains.
She kept all our mementos in her eyes.
She willed them all to me.

48C

FULL CYCLE

The spring of love leaps lightly with the season;
It warms each day without much hope of rest.
It wrestles nightly with our star-wrecked reason
While every sense grows keen with greening zest.
The summer sun ignites the waiting west,
Outsplendored by the mirrored pair below,
Uncooled by native nocturnes, at their crest,
Still pulsing, pacing with a swift rondo.
When first the fringe of fall begins to show
As subtle as a kiss conveyed with eyes,
Then lovers feel their time and tempo slow,
And hide it with a hundred little lies.
If summer shades burned deep, days will re-blue;
Late honey-haze will light the hearth anew.

April

ANNIVERSARY: DRIVING THE OLYMPIC PENINSULA

The blue of and behind your eyes

2

THE STAR SALESMAN STAGES A DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

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21

38E

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387

WEATHERSCAPE

The radio says we'll get fringes of an anticyclone about ten o'clock. Miles of sea have already scrubbed this migrant air, all the knuckles of this wind trying to pry open my mouth like an angry nurse with a dose of salts. Mixed currents tore their tethers from the pole, spiraled down north by east to harass the shutters on my windows, planting sand and salmon scales in wood pores. Mine are stinging pink with Katmai pumice and oily smoke from Athabascan cookfires. My teeth grit glacial silt; my lungs fatten on the breath of rutting moose. Seal hair whips and tangles with my gray. This prelude cry rolls from throats of Tlingit fishermen, famished grizzlies, falling spruce. Specimen rose-trees on my lawn make no sound kneeling nor can I hear their breaking. The time is near. I know what this wind wants after raking the backs of guillemots, scraping up swatches of desiccated taiga moss, banking off centuries of guano and granite. No one escapes the northland. All the vagrant gales converge in the stoop of a hawk, arrowheaded by an ancient narwhal nailing me to the last wall until it goes down.

1st. Prize, Poets & Patrons, Chicago

Glenna Holloway
913 E. Bailey Rd.
Naperville, IL 60565

14 lines

OVERTURE IN BEE FLATS
Glenn Holloway

Just like an armored knight I sally out
To brave my gauntlet, gloved and cloaked with care.
I still collect booty with waves of doubt
That I'll escape another well-aimed pair
Or more of pulsing spears injecting me
With fire, leaving each gilded guardian less
Her lance, a fierce and willing casualty
Of my timorous lordship's due process.
Perfectly programmed for serving their queen,
They never see their jewels in my jars
Serve sweet-toothed ladies-in waiting between
Biscuits with butter, and apple-nut bars.
It's worth each risk this adventurer takes
To taste warm gems my other honey makes.

Glenna Holloway
913 E. Bailey Rd.
Naperville, IL 60565

5 lines

HAIKU INHERENT

Glenna Holloway

Out of wet darkness—
the two-octave treble cry
of a single loon.
Night is suddenly colder
and I, alone, am older.

December 1985

Glenna Holloway
913 E. Bailey Rd.
Naperville, IL 60565

166-1. WEATHERSCAPE

The radio says we'll get fringes of an anticyclone

167-2. A SURGEON'S SESTINA *In Top 20*

Beneath my closing lids the scene still waits

168-3. LIONESS

your mate abdicates the role

169-4. KING TUTANKHAMUN: ONCE THERE WAS A BOY WHO LOVED TO WHISTLE - *In Top 20*
Young pharaoh, I studied your museumed effigies

170-5. LAST UNCLE

In my dandelion days

171-6. YOU ASK IF I'VE FORGOTTEN HIM

I think of him when lightning splits

172-7. THE ENLIGHTENED ONE

Fujiyama:

173-8. BEQUEST FOR AN ARTIST WHO DIED IN THE SPRING

Shades of leftover winter dull the pigments, etc.

Dear Vivian:

I hope you have a lovely Christmas season. If you went to the Texas poetry dinner, I hope you liked my Hawaii poem. Trust you got my thank you note. *yes -*

Not much chance I'll win the Dec. pot twice but decided to try. I've been sickly most of the year. Thank God for poetry. These aren't all new of course, but I have written more this year than ever before. Also have been doing a lot of judging which I enjoy. Would be glad to do it for you sometime if you wish.

Received your letter - March poems will
be fine for you to judge in April.
Thanks loads!

Cordially,

Glenne

Vivian
1/13/85

CAT OF ONE COLOR

(Felis concolor)

She's hard to find. He's even harder.
 But if westering luck is just so, and the wind,
 your six senses stropped on its wake,
 you may see one—
 you won't forget a mountain lion's eyes.
 Nothing in those eyes spells trust
 but no malice either despite the stalking lies.

Raw gold from Oriental idol or maybe
 summer lightning, the eyes burn cool and easy—
 slant-lit slots fringed with gentians,
 quartz-capped shadow crosshatched with bones,
 limbs, fleeing legs of deer, suntanned grass
 tinged with pine-drop, amber globules
 on twigs, stormed-down aspen hearts, spruce cones
 and wilding wavy smells— Here the eyes belong
 for looking in, for looking out—
 windows matching pale tawn
 designed for quiet and quick or gone.

In a back-warp of timerance and time
 catamount came to rhyme with vermin; ~~and~~ scolded
 dogs and bullets the exclamation points
 of ignorance— all feline-coded... ~~and~~ gilding
 in the gilded, fluent glance,
 a shrug of fact, a loaded blink.

Caught now leaping the kindred sun in slow motion,
 framed free on my sprocketed strip of pulse-stop,
 the cougar figures a sum of truth in live color.
 And for me the nature of joy
 will never be the same.

Top 10
 Now this is a
 poem -

August
126

THEORY OF RELATIVITY: THE FELINE FACTOR

The fourth dimension
is better understood now
living with a life form
that claims the realm of clocks
and calendars as its own.

The lesson wanders home
circuitous orbits of shadow and shine
skyward tail aquiver with equations
ending in a distinctive warp
its wearer owes to lunar time
advanced in arcane ritual.

Between his multi-lives out there
my lap is a warm space station
sometimes not fully approved.
I learn minute increments
of days and nights slowly
while waiting for the sidewise approach
of distance
to rub my shins with forgiveness.

Top 15
good metaphors

July June 208

DUET

Music in a minor key
tunnels in my ear like a threading screw
and lodges in a hungry hollow.
Echo isn't what it does there--
this isn't ricochet sound
fading as it goes, but what I hear
begins at the top and plays through
then, undiminished, plays again.
It may last hours, follow me to sleep.
Next day, next month it comes
unbidden, not from outside prompting.

I've homed on guitars on dark beaches,
halted dials sliding toward the 10 o'clock news,
followed a tipsy tenor trio bringing
Some unknown aria to a tremulous minor denouement
on a street corner in Oslo.

One night in San Francisco
you played some Debussy
improvising modulating filling
my special space until my sympathetic tines
were trembling like gold aspens.
I slipped from my group and moved
toward your unseen face. But you had left
the piano to blend with other guests.
Still I knew you by your voice and when
you repeated my name your jade and lavender notes
matched my vault where all those wind and water
chords are stored. So after all their years
of haunting, waiting for direction,
you gave them a theme
and put them in endless concerto
with space for those we'll hear tomorrow
together.

Glenna Holloway
913 E. Bailey Rd.
Naperville, IL 60565

OLD "IROQUOIS WHIT", RED MAN WITH A WHITE CANE

Glenna Holloway

For him our metaphors are worse than trite,
Most modern terms are bothers to his brain
Where years-gone wispy hunter's trails remain
And only childhood images are bright.

When man transcends his bone-imprisoned night
To touch shore's gritty Braille or taste fresh rain,
His lengthened grasp can snatch the key from pain
To open what mere language failed to light.

We read to Whit, then he became our gauge,
Our guide for measures we could seldom find
To pace the dark, to pacify the rage.

For we, far sighted, young and keen of mind,
Were often trapped inside a blackened cage—
Till life re-lit with vision from the blind.

good !

cannot touch it
unless it is completely
free.

H.J.

Glenna Holloway
913 E. Bailey Rd.
Naperville, IL 60565

16 lines

FALLING WEATHER

Glenna Holloway

The last of autumn came down wet and hard.
For nearly two weeks all we heard
was warring water, javelins of rain.
And then subverted river overran
its trench, joined forces with its kin
to sludge the lowlands, slime the cane.
For miles the occupation gray-washed
mudscapes as the mindless wind-prod wished,
letting all our sullen eyes reflect
our impotence. At last we watch foam-flocked
retreat; faint sun grovels in refraction
of trickles, withdrawal etched by friction
between what stays and what must leave.
Then while we sort the salvage, lave
the conscious grit and clear the rubbed mind,
rebel clouds regroup under new command.

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You have certainly used near-rhymes with care. While finding this an accomplishment worth noting, I do not feel the poem is a Lyric.

FALLING WEATHER

The last of autumn came down wet and hard.
For nearly two weeks all we heard
was warring water, javelins of rain.
Soon subverted river overran
its trench, joined forces with its kin
to sludge the valley, slime the cane.
For miles the occupation gray-washed
homes with camouflage, patterned as wind wished,
making all our captive eyes reflect
our impotence. And now we watch foam-flocked
retreat: Faint sun grovels in refraction
of trickles, withdrawal etched by friction
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BUYING BANANAS

Vivid and verdant as giant pea pods
it will be 4 or 5 days
before you can eat them.

If you skinned one now and left it
on the table it would turn to an ivory tusk.

If you swallowed one now it would sink
like a petrified log inside your moist tropics,
tasting of gall green and primeval evolution.

Whiffs of grocers' warehouse wizardry
have already rescheduled their secret golding
halted when hacked from their mothering tree.
Nothing can hurry them now.

Time tickles the codes within.

Five years ago I brought you home green

firm and curved. Everyone said
you would ripen into a perfect mate.

I'm still waiting
for those first freckles of sweetness.

CROW WATCH

Each year third week in August
they come to savage my cornfield
and twang my nerves with Halloween laughter
thousands of greasy black rags
from the refuse bins of hell
flapping all over my sight
dirtying my days
violating my airspace.

Then when the corn is gone
one of the loitering bastards
will spite my well with its death
from overeating
while another spikes the placenta of my dreams
and impales the dark navel of the mind
on its crucible eye.

February
195

AFRICAN CHRONICLE: THE BAOBAB TREE

Morning:

A ragged inkblot against the sun
erupts like a geyser into crazed sky.
Zigzag in slow motion
a black quill
returns to tangled branches of calligraphy.
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lurch upward to await the twilight embrace
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