

F l e s h s o n g s

The boy holds a wooden flute
to his thick lips,
fingers feeling holes,
head covered in a brown and blue hood.
A caged parrot, a malicious owl.
Lilies in a vase,
withered flowers.
A snuffed out candle, signs
of smoke. Papers strewn, her glasses
on her nose, grandma holds
music sheets.
Her daughter reveals a fleshy
neckline, a glass of wine, tilted,
cheekbones red, singing.
Blonde boy toys his mouth,
the collie licks grapes. Grandpa,
triple-chinned, grabs his frothy beer,
gold Belgian.
Shiny lemon wedges curled,
sliced fish stretching in a tray,
bread rolls, and oranges.
A rabbit. Something Flemish.

Sorbonne

She walks barefoot, her
beaded anklet wrapped,
loose. A mini-skirt, light blue
cotton, red rose prints, her
bohemian freedom. I have a
picture of you drinking a carton
of strawberry milk.

You, me, feeling the warmth
of our hands, gently held,
the scented breeze,
the Eiffel Tower looks over us.

Paris, lighting our evening walks,
lilacs of your body.

A party at her place, they passed
colombian joints. I watched,
one by one.

Louise – they carried to the Renault.
Morning cars hooting, waking me up.
I dreamed the “au revoir” train
tracks.

You told me in a letter we live in
two galaxies, me and you.

I still wear her Sorbonne sweat shirt.

T o u c h

Warmth trickles through his palm,
his blood; he wants to touch
the horse's long eyelashes. Instead,
he plucks the fruit, hanging over,
and sucks on sweetness. He stands
lonely, senses fatigue sedating his
mind, paralysing each limb of his body,
not finishing the succulent juices, he
drops in dizziness.

Her eyes settle on his thick wavy hair,
then his deep eyes, full wet lips,
body like hers, different, but not like
the animal beside him. She steps closer,
silently, as though not to wake him. She
puts her hands gently on his chest,
kisses his face, moist lips, she feels
warmth of his breath. A tickling sensation
fills her body.

His eyes open to meet her.

Drawing*

A creation of Marie-Pierre,
or God, flesh detailed lines.

Lying, fully extended, a restful pose.

Your eyes turned away, tracing
a Roman nose. Lips concealed,
thick neck.

A god yourself. Maybe.

Muscles define your long arms,
athlete thighs. Legs smooth, your
feet solid.

Your body pulsates
before me; every bone a purpose.

Hundreds of sketches
discarded sheets
to produce the perfect man.

* *National Art Gallery, Ottawa.*
Exhibition of French Artists in Rome.

Serpent's coil

around hard brown bark
she grabs the swollen tail
fruit
in death's hand
deadly bite
firm red lips, strong chin
forehead straight
corner of her eyes mock
death's ugliness
thin fingers caress the fruit
tight in her right hand
smooth scales
blue squares and black diamonds
inch
hypnotise seduce
her reaching touch
– just once:
to taste your sweet poison.

1920s Berlin Gästehaus
(after the Wall)

Her heels cut my thoughts,
I waited for Hacker-Pschoor.
Hard oak tables square and straight.
Fried sausages, after classes.
For her, Chilean wine, not too dry.
Beethoven hits his keys hard.
Parisian student Geneviève,
lectured me on international law.
Syllables brushed smooth on silk.
A *kleine* German lamp spies on us,
her rounded lips, my empty glass.
Summer *Strassen* of secret blues.
Broken Italian lyrics fall,
like ice in her hand, unmelted.
August ends. Again a train.

Lady Anne Clifford

Your milk-like skin,
let me touch you.

Your fresh fair face,
softly your heart beats.

Your neckline of lace,
white blouse of silk,
my fingers run through.

Your feminine beauty,
I revere.

Your Yorkshire embraced –
pearl bracelet
for me to catch.

Your pink ribbons from your finger
to your breasts...
may I untie them?

Your blue eyes, perhaps Irish,
daughter of an English Lord,
my caresses kiss you.

But you're married to Lord Mahoney:
you embody his inheritance.

Pierre Subleyras dreams,
and I.

Quirinale Gardens

I stumbled across the gardens,
French Artists in Rome, 17th-18th
Centuries, Exhibition.

Yellow shades, Roman
sun, “Giardini Quirinale.” Semi-
circular steps, cascade majestic.
A man in a formal suit, a woman,
ruffled layers, together, small, below
arching green trees.

A hard warm bench,
their whispers, Italian syllables,
carried by sparrows, lyrics of
Virgil’s nightingale, nesting
on Vittoriano lamps.

Pointers and Lagottos race, snarling
in the dewy grass. A marble fountain
cools the morning air, water flows,
my throat dry. A Cane Corso joins
the competition, fenced by a stone
baluster, to a halt.

Wrens pipe loudest, covering lovers.

Filippo and Esther

She folds her dress above
the right knee, as if uncertain.
Pointing with the other: *I am not
your goddess, and I know
what must be done.*

Bloody bodies torn, shredded
one by one, son after son. Unseen
in a pastel turquoise
sky serene, blue silk,
layers of gold and green
velvet, hide
royal red blood.

Esther's wide black eyes,
her open mouth and red tongue,
the shrilling syllables, a dry scream,
her ten slaughtered sons.

Caravaggio's heads

Blue silk dress her destiny layered white
soft shoulders, feminine flesh,
iron sword clenched tight hard
red hands determined veins.
White shirt creased in his blood, Judith's
bulging eyes devour Holofernes,
holds him like a lioness mauling her
agonising prey.

A ruddy teenager disheveled,
stares at me satisfied,
huge bearded head held,
adolescent hand, clenched fist,
stringy brute's hair falls.

Salomé smiles delighted, platter
of blood dripping, goat-like.
I want to touch his sun-beaten flesh,
eyes closed. Herodias stares.
Prize. Oath. Plot.
Capricious triangle.

Plato's Florence

Melted turquoise – poured
hazelnut pecan-chopped
look!

Glass bubbling fountains,
red satin flutters in a piazza.

Venus in her white
shell.

David

holds a sling, fist tight,
bulging veins.

New lip-stick, cherry-purple,
wet thick
hair falls to her hips

... pulled to one side.

Roman sandals,
American jeans,
Moses reveals his horns.

She rips the pomegranate
– sucks the crimson juice.

Reddened tongue,
the *Symposium* opens.