

TRIMMER MAN

As I sat there seven in the barber's chair
I heard him say I buried my wife yesterday
to the assembled men waiting to be next. Are
they going to arrest him I thought, but no,
they were too anxious to be trimmed. To
have him leave now would upset schedules.
No crew cuts. No searching out the secret hairs
in old men's noses.

Was she sick long? Not long enough to mention.
Like a peach tree running sap it was time.
I buried her with my son there, that's all.

I wondered how long it took him to heap the
earth, and the shovel, is it hanging yet
behind the cellar door where he sees it
now and then?

NO SECOND PLATOS

The very weight of all that clutter
at the bottom of their minds
must make them cluck so
How else the noise—the clatter
of their chatter, the vegetable linings
of their minds left out to dry; their word
expulsions in little sputters, then loud
explodings—their final dim pronouncements.

. . . are we all here . . .

I always wake up a little droplet
at a time. Like fractured quicksilver
I slither from my bed and trail small
parts of me into the kitchen where I
ingest the necessary two-and one-half
cups. Now I ask myself: am I whole
enough to face the day, or are there
unaccounted parts of me still trailing
back to yesterday?

EMILY DICKINSON GETS CRANKY

Why do You stop this Carriage?
Why do You stop this Hearse?
I haven't finished writing
All my laconic verse—

Stop taking me to visit Mounds—
You've soiled my Gossamer train—
Accelerate those Horses Heads
Before I cleave your Brain.

“Amethyst flies keep buzzing, buzzing”
So Immortality said;
In Truth he's tipped my Tankard
And the Dew has gone to his head.

Civility, kind sir, move over—
You've mashed my Robin's Cravat
O there's need for memorial service
On the Spot exact where you sat.

Enough of Recess and Wrestling!
I'll thank you, sirs, to split—
You've unbraced my dimity Conviction
And stilled my Robin's Twit.

Billy doesn't know a hemorrhoid

as he rides his bike in his black spandex shorts
drinking bottled water with one hand and
controlling the handlebars with envied ease.
As he circles every bend in the road, does he
know for certain what is ahead? His glistening
sweat is sure—he accepts that; what he doesn't
know: the yawn of the hungry cul-de-sac with no
elastic exit.

NEAR A MALL PASTRY STAND

As silent as cinnamon-sprinkle
She went content into eternity
That stranger woman in the mall.

I closed her eyes and folded her in two
As her sweet wafered breath crossed my face
And rose high into the structure's light.

NAM EVERY NIGHT

(for jlr)

It's always four in the morning
There are no ministering angels
Just stained permanent grave soil
And the drip, drip, drip of rain
Seeping through the earthen weight
Where hovers the mud-brown clay
Of You so far in the back road
Too slow in the dying to catch up
 In the savor
 Of the dark
 Black moment
 Of the soul.