

THAT SHIP HAS SAILED

In our old life, we ate ice cream and bread pudding. We drank glass after glass of Grand Marnier until it made us sick. Our libido was as big as a billboard. Our libido was larger than a drive-in theater screen in the middle of nowhere playing endless adolescent pornographic classics. We had an appetite for appetite. We poured melted lard all over our popcorn which we then covered with a snowstorm of salt. We smoked, we snorted, we cavorted with people who were best left alone. We talked all fucking night on the phone. We read Keats and Yeats and all the greats day and night. We got into fights in pubs. We drank sixteen cups of coffee every day. We called in sick and spent the day in mysteries, doubts, uncertainties. We shirked our responsibilities without a second thought. We ate Chinese food and pizza for breakfast. We rode the bus to visit friends wherever they might be. We stole books. We cheated, we lied, we cried. We danced all night in the living room around the Christmas tree.

In our new life, we try to remember the names of the people we think we might have slept with. We haul the bags of frozen broccoli out

of the freezer. We light a candle
to commemorate crossing
the great divide between
the green island of the young
and the songs in our bones
that have come unsung.

PREAMBLE

We the people do not like fish.
How many times do we have to tell you that?
We the people form perfect smoke rings
puffed out in perfect rhythm. We the people
in order to establish boundaries, need
for you to back off, dude. When we sit down,
we sit down for a purpose. But when we get
up, everybody else seems to be sitting.

A guy named Bill was just here to borrow
money, but we told him we would provide
him with no coin. Because we are the people
who make the rules on land and water.
Even the skies are not safe from us.

Sometimes we are required to go out
and discipline our inferiors. We provide
and maintain a freezer full of ice cream
and sausages. No person shall be eligible
to seize our cans of Reddi-wip, nor shall
any person deprive us of two-thirds
of the coats that hang in the closet.

We shall meet with you at noon
on the 17th day of December
in front of Whole Foods. Good luck
finding a parking space. Do not belittle
us ex post facto. We the people are
on the loose and coming for you.

A WOMAN WHO MURDERED HER HUSBAND

A woman who murdered her husband
once lived in my house
for several weeks.

She was from the West Indies.

This was
a long time ago.
But I still remember
how sweet she was,
always smiling.

One of my housemates at the time
was a corrupt lawyer
who took on cases
assigned to him by the city.

He would
sometimes laugh and tell us that he
was taking off for his little country place

and his indigent clients in jail would have to wait
another few days. He seemed to think this was amusing.
We wanted to believe he was only joking, but we didn't.

Sometimes he would surprise us,
as he did by inviting the murderer to live
with us until her trial.

We suspected there
must have been something
in it for him

and now I wonder
if she had to sleep
with him as the price
of her room and board.

That must be it. He was too selfish
and greedy to act out of simple mercy.

The woman's husband was a brutal wife-beater
but he pushed his luck a bit too far.

One night,
as he slept,
 she killed him
 with a hammer.

The lawyer thought she might get off
with a light sentence
because of the abuse.

While she lived with us
we couldn't get her
to stop working.

She cleaned and scrubbed
our hippie hovel till it sparkled.

I don't know
what became of her.

I hope she is living free
somewhere, enjoying life.

The lawyer died
a few years ago.

People who didn't know
him very well mourned his passing.