



Buses Don't Go There

Lynda Caspe



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Candia, New Hampshire

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Purple

Thin gravy
mysterious
transparent veil
between day and night
color of
shadows, pregnant
with eggplants and plums
past and distant
Roman imperial
sea ink, product of
mollusks and monk hood
sign of
highest honor and
poisonous death.

The Old Photo

I have a photo
Of a girl
And her parents
The photo has
Hebrew letters
On it

The daughter
Is moving
In the ashes
She is putting
Her arms
About her father
“Oh Daddy
You are
So clean
I am
So dirty.”

Shall we
Celebrate with a
Jewish holiday
That this
Family escaped
The Nazi holocaust
By all kinds
Of tricks?

“Father” the
Daughter is saying
“Bring me a green
Growing bough
While I try
To pick seeds
Out of the old
Black and white
Photo crumbling
In my desk.”

Form

In great pleasure
thought and speech
are confused
setting free
the shape
of a triangle

Murderer

On Monday I killed
Some people.
I sliced off the heads
And boiled them.
Their eyes were still open.

I was upset
Only that my children
Might find out.

Mothers can be
Murderers too.

To My Father

Most of you died before your death
Like an old plumped up chair
That has lost its stuffing.
Loneliness replaced the bravado
And anger of youth.
Old flattened empty chair!
How I would have loved
To have sat on your knee
And teased you.
If I had to have a chair,
How I would have loved
A well used one,
Ragged and familiar.
I had a museum piece
One that stood behind
A forbidding rope.
If I reached out
The guard would stop me
Afraid I would damage
The fragile material.

Summer Sun

The sun
On Franklin Street
In the summer
Glistens
Blinds
Only in the shadows
Are things clear.
It breaks your teeth
Knocks your eye out
Looks like water spilled
All over
The sidewalk
Light reflects
As off a mirror
Or a calm sea.

Night Animals

No: in time the salt soul of my heart
And I will celebrate disgust with a grand gesture
Sounds of night mire, might, animal
Sliding smooth and watery, night,
 animal velvet.

Night bells along in the undergrowth
Fishes drunk with wind and water licked
Night lettuce serenades brick fences
In Kalamazoo still lands gently.

Night burns strict and severe
Willingly senses inherent witches
In the whitened it is still forbidden
Swinging immersed in the cellar of the
 senses.

A Tale of Telling and Knowing

In order for me
to protect myself
I must tell people
who I am.

In this world where
everyone pretends
to be someone else
I must be sure
you know
or the Pekingese dog
and the man who is
chasing the woman
might kill her.

He catches her
but luckily
at the same time
I tell people
who I am
In fact he catches
her the same time
the police do.

The Telephone

I ride horses

While talking on the phone

Sometimes I find

I can't talk

Sometimes I ask

The person to hang on

Sometimes I forget

They are waiting

For me

Listening.

Separation

The black man stands
In the library of old books
He takes off one of his shoe
And pours milk into it
He holds the shoe
Below my son's chin

I will take one ship
My son will take another
Only pins hang above
The earth and the ocean.

Intimacy

Doors stay shut with locks.
Windows seal safely with shutters
My mother sews.

Someone fired a shot
Through the stage curtain.
The torn hole upset
My mother, the actress
She felt the curtain
Belonged to her
Not to the audience.
My mother, and her friend
Sew.

Whose scissors are these?
Whose keys?
My mother, her friend and I
Sew.

**In The Sunlight Even A Billiard Table Is A
Beautiful Thing To Behold**

The pool table soaked in light
Shines a bright orange.
In the shadows the wood turns
Reddish brown.
The sun washes the felt
White.
Two billiard balls perch in the middle
One viridian, one maroon.
Their shadows grasp dark green edges.
They fan out from purple red splashes.
The dark side transmits translucent images
While the light dazzles the eye.

The Arab Woman's Tent

I am hidden inside
A large tent
A man is coming
To visit me
Men can visit women
But women can never
Visit men
My tent is made out
Of a soft material
It sways as people
Lean against it
The pressure doesn't
Really reach me
I am crouched
In the center
I can't even tell
Who it is
I am inside
He is out

Night Bristles

Some say at night

Woman's hair is so strong

It can net the moon

Or catch tigers and elk

Out of the sky

Strong as wet silk

It tangles feet hopelessly

Coarse as sandpaper

It smoothes out rough edges

Sprinkles the sky with stars

Portrait In Time

A huge mouth
They made me
Drink first and
Eat later
That made me mad.

Where is it?
Where did I leave it?

A broken record
The same song
Over and over
Some of the grooves
Go to the center
Like spokes of a wheel
That carry me
Forward.

Where is it?
Where did I leave it?

The clock with
Pictures on it
Chimes.
Each time the hands
Pass over the face
The picture changes
A little.

One picture is of a pretty
Young woman
Holding a pigeon
She smiles happily
In one mirror the
Figure looms huge
Another reflects
A small person.

Where is it?
Where did I leave it?

China Moon

A dog swallowed
The moon
Last night
And spit
It back
There was
A toad
Hidden
In it

Survivor

I am a thief
A thief
What kind
Of a thief?
A cactus.

A Day In My Life

The sun will rise soon.
The air has a slight grey edge.

My ten year old moves in slow motion.
He forgets his glasses, homework, sweater, keys.
The radio tells me how difficult
It is to fight in a desert.

I leave to teach people
Who don't want to learn.

I rush home.
An artist comes to see me.
He is older and has had a heart attack
He is frightened.
We go out to eat.

I pick up my son at his friend's party.
When we return home, he goes to bed.
In the dark, I can see burning buildings
And hear the whirring of helicopters.

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In the dead years more real than life

You can sit in dreams

Hovering just above chimneys

Climb crumbling bricks

Stare at a cow.

The afternoon seems

Like a shaft of sunlight.

I lift my small foot

To step into it

Pick wild scallions

Inside a rocking swan.

Passing Time

Everything changes so quickly
From my window
Just a little while ago
It was raining
Then the sun was in my eyes.

Then dark grey puffs whipped
Across the sky
And behind some buildings.

Now the sky is a brilliant blue
And the buildings are orange.

No the blue is pale
And the buildings are dark rust.

No both are dark but the sky is
A mass of grey and purple splashes.

Then black
Rectangles overlapping each other
With steel blue, dark yellow and
Lemon lights.

Lower East Side

The buildings rise
Teeth in a small jaw

Light is dragged
Along the street
Like a kill.

Where is this? Chicago?
Asks the warehouse worker
His hands touch the
Smooth, liquid surface
And sink to the
Hard nut center
Of the color.

To An Artist On His Death

White palm sun of night gold
Hats off. This night open halt

And speak:

Hum leashed streets entangled
With sellers and strollers
A garland hat of water green
He painted colored gold
At the edge of wonder
A slight of moving hands
Of glistening landscape mocked
A dirt comet shining
And a handful of mist.

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The cover illustration & watercolor are by Lynda Caspe.
Thirty copies are bound in boards and will have
original watercolor depictions of horses and
their riders. One hundred seventy copies will be
hand sewn in Rives papers.
All copies will be numbered and signed
by artist and poet Lynda Caspe.

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