

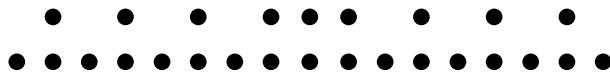
# are:era

15 poems

by Derek  
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AN UPTON THOROUGHFARE PUBLICATION





I remember a woman  
named 'Dot Josslewitz'  
she was a personality occasionally slipped  
from behind my Grandmother's dentures

having never met her  
I recognized her attributes secondhand –  
eyes winked behind hornrims  
fingers danced (usually knitting)

laughs echoed out of stories  
into my Grandmother's own voice  
(what a wonderful woman this Dot thought  
I to have presently brought past laughter here)



in slate layers – stacked recently reverently neatly  
on dark towns night rains spattering quietly  
a lining which webs a span of coating weather  
evenly and solemnly – damping darkly over roofs

three white cats huddle protectively beneath cool porches  
fronts thatched which steep before sleeping lawns  
noisily a purr of lovebirds beneath a maple bough  
steadily hiding from the pouring sky beyond

the glowing porch – inviting ghosts (pale fellows  
who stand comfortably within the incandescence)  
while the furred purring flight of this world and its creatures  
offer secretly their wonder (which stays unanswered)



houses line up muttering patiently –  
soft grey glows seep from porch fronts  
each boasts brightly a ghost  
pale fellows (timid sometimes mute otters)  
longingly gliding above grounds

I watch – tending to harder truths (solving  
vividly nothing) making guests themselves  
on my railings concentrating light – wearing almost  
my unloving quiet neighborhood as a coat  
(while cats whistle under benches at nobody)

every house – a soul without definition  
the rotting pins of August steal vividness –  
my ghosts have nobody frightened  
padding happy instead at incandescence –  
rivers who rise steadily into furniture



Jim was given (aside  
from his Word which does  
a remarkable enough already)

the talent to grind sand  
into dust and then –  
with a Zzzap

get glass

he pilfers silver  
(from his watchband or  
pawn shop cases)

and gently backs  
these new panes –  
so everytime

his Word

is tired or ill or  
off on business he can  
birth beauty regardless

my fantastic thanks to fellow  
musketeer mirrmaker James Chapman  
for always rendering Radiance



always something like a  
two hundred (or so) class  
room school building stands  
each day at the same time  
rises to salute The Cloth  
God itself thrust up a Pole

'but we're Americans!  
and I pledge all legions'  
all but not quite students most  
stand presenting palms  
to shirtcollars wrists  
to empty academic  
air in a huff of duty

teachers (every) supposed to (are few) follow  
directions encourage re-citing echoing loud  
speakers buzzing routinely in corner fixtures

the ones interesting me always are never the ones interesting  
themselves in seeing a blue red and white napkin float on an  
outsized toothpick

but brave enough not to  
Nazi themselves (O God I don't God to)  
and sit enjoying the government chair provided  
to school for the very profit  
of comfortable teaching vantages

and smile instead dreaming ideal instants  
at Obama and his Wife walking  
out of a newspaper clipping embedded  
on a wall-plaster by four red thumbtacks

startle me happily



venning

he tried giving ninety cents –  
not her one dollar asking price

“nobody’s got any money I wish  
I had your money it costs a lot  
to have money like that”

she sighs relenting bargains  
to her old self: eighty-five cents



dreamily from the kitchen stereo meanders  
a sleeping melody voice and accompanying  
virtuosic instrument set beguiling the audience  
light has only begun to recede  
from the east corner of the world –  
shifting just above the roof

three gentleman occupy this kitchen  
one obviously an audibly curled snarling individual  
throttling such beauty with bright tones and solemnity  
– (out of a murmuring tattered melodic hat springs he)  
the other two occupants (differently mannered but  
mannered) regardless are human and divine

the humane intuitions of the first are showing  
his finger to plink lightly in rhythm similar  
complimenting oddly the dark solemnity and brightness  
of the unmentioned guest's tones – the first guest curls  
his own hand about his porcelain mug and goes on plinking  
for the soundness of the invisible guest – the final guest

crosses simply his arms and masterfully pats his beard  
absently his white sideburns and clutches not meaningfully  
his maple crook-stick (whereupon he walks) striking  
contemplatively the marble wood floor whiter than his fur  
which causes for the earth Great Thunder –  
while all three guests render and accept Greater Peace



mystics are ignorant  
of anything particular  
lying amazing  
in front of them

they love living and hate life  
seeing it as only a thing to dissect  
their operating tables tarot cards  
floors many other ignoramuses

my intent opposes mediums  
I love life (I hate living)  
they call me mad but I know I'm not  
paying 5-dollars-a-minute-but-7-to-connect-you



virile frantic fingers paw clumsily at reason  
beyond sensibility which begins sense (a more acute flight  
which throws itself with any opportunity) without knowing  
why –  
this Girl sweetly alive watching bitterly the hour sweep far  
too far ahead for her completion (the Man is belittled also  
at the sense of coinciding beats of thought and songs of seek)  
the ripe sting of perhaps hangs heavily for both

dear friends rushing sidewise ceremonial and eating  
pieces of their opinioned observations crazily  
shattered like fine china over dear heads which nod  
completely  
at words that appear without waiting – words which spring  
singing  
inside fingers faces or fears which harass the very confidence  
responsible for joining the dearest together – the words  
erase all bitterness with smallness and adjoining glistening  
vulnerable Impossible Intuition

located in the heart and ensnared around the Girl who  
privately  
moves her soul body voice hands – flies directly  
a youthful tending silent cautious encouragement at no  
expense  
finds and causes a crying clapping pausing breathing  
gorgeous  
murmur which melts all apparent age – this is the moment  
where no border exists and where the rot is sweeter than  
Candyland –  
the united division becomes an adored understanding



fill your mind with space  
men who float above  
your strange new charcoal town  
instead of unmeeting people –  
your face fresh still too

its atmosphere running  
against unfriendly air (to you)  
nothing is as it should  
be

leave it to me  
ad vice veritas



anticipating my departure  
a week-long vacation (for vacation's sake)  
peacefully packing and lightly laundering  
I pause to answer my phone  
my Grandmother's voice carries sudden sorrow

grief gives her speech fractures  
her breath bears new weight  
'I just came up from the basement'  
a heart sinking explains  
her cat is on Death's doorstep  
distraught (and directly dire)  
impossible timing introduces itself

my connection to this feline felt fastly  
(aged almost exactly as I)  
eighteen years of weight noses  
spilled saucers  
adoptive guardians guiding growth  
(but buried bonds will break as dirt clods soon enough)

my consolation promised immediately  
I'd visit after my shorelines stay –  
this is Life's mostly mad sequencing  
an escape as precursor to eulogy  
a catnap (eternally) under backyard daffodils



we sleep an afternoon  
still fingers stray  
randomly active to strike  
stressful stigmas off

an outsourced playground  
for outsize children  
grown up bandy-legged  
beyond booze-binging borders

self-crowned monarchs stalk the palace  
making no motions to stem ebbs  
of early luminosity (lingering  
in corners of wicker chairs)

morning light playing angles  
like poker hands or translucent red dice  
by one view a king and queen of nowhere  
another revealing street urchins



when I conceive my child  
the event will itself  
happenings bear

my woman chosen will  
lie back fully clenching  
the gentlest fist of her soul

two hearts madden –  
flinging themselves at the(m)other's  
chest walls

fainting with wisdom or wearing without  
the disputably unanswered question  
of life partially complete



my woman has nothing  
to mend – sifting although  
certain staring strains  
of lapsed wavering

conversations otherwise  
limitless until  
sleep matters just  
enough before (wholly)  
the sun floats

the faintest blue wisp  
of twilight threaded  
in segments between  
our teeth



forests assault with spines petrified  
denying comfort from receding mosses –  
rushes rip tendons of reed from lakemouths

bitter carcasses of waterfowl  
plastered against cliffsides  
as terminated sweepstakes

ever cadavers sting  
the earth's chin –  
pocketing ultimately yards deep





Derek Crofut wants to gouge his eyes out.

