

Poetry Series

Kate Richardson
- poems -

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Kate Richardson()

Close Shave

For Valentine's Day
He gave her a razor
In a heart-shaped box.
"For my love, " he said,
But she knew it was
For her legs.

Later that night,
At her dressing table,
She opened the foil.
Slowly, she drew out the instrument
That could shape their
Love into something perfect.

Kate Richardson

Groundhog

In February, we find it lying motionless
In full sunlight. With no shadow for prediction,
We think it is dying and leave it alone.

The next day it remains, eyes open,
Breathing steadier, trying to move.
Again, we back away.

We read the poems: Kumin and Stafford,
Know their images of life and death.
But miss the obvious, the necessary.

Days before, machines had arrived,
Broke up an old shed and hauled it away.
The groundhog, wrenched from dark and rest
Crept from its burrow under the building.

Weighed down by the shroud
Of hibernation, it is stuck,
Its calendar tattered:
Two months torn out and erased,
Replaced by a false spring demanding resurrection.

On the third day, the groundhog
Rolls the weight of its body
Onto shaky legs and
Crosses into an unfamiliar season.

Kate Richardson

Hirsute

When he met her in the spring
She was baby-smooth.
Copper hair wisped over
Pale, thin brows.
She was a peach.
If sunlight touched her arms
It dissolved in their golden glow.

Summer, climbing
From the pool, she
Stretched her arms
Above her head.
In the hollows, he saw
Shadows and turned
His head away.

By fall, there were shadows
Everywhere:
Arms, wrists,
Legs, cheeks,
Across her thighs,
Around her lips.
He closed his eyes
Tight against
Other places,
Other shadows.

For winter, her hair
Grew in full.
It terrified him:
Red strands coiling,
Reaching down for
Neck, shoulders, knees.

How could this be?
Here was his love
Turning to flesh
And blood
Before him.

Kate Richardson

Hook

When Peter Pan got home
There was a note on the phone:
Call Hook. Peter knew where;
He dialed the number
To the Tick Tock Club.
"What's up?" he asked
When Hook was on the line. Peter
Could hear the beat of the
Jukebox through the receiver. It sounded
Like it was under water.
"It's my hook," the old pirate said.
"I'm thinking of replacing it. It was fine
When I played bass in that band, but now...
And women, they think it's dangerous. Last
One told me: Heavy Metal is so over."
"If you kept the hook, you could be a baker.
You could knead dough," Peter suggested.
"Grow up," Hook snarled, "That's part of the problem."
"What, then?" Peter asked.
Hook sighed, "Something hinged,
Narrow, grasping, like a jaw. I need to
Hold onto jobs instead of tearing them
To bits, like I do now."
Peter said, "But you've
Had the same hook for so long. Won't you
Be lost without it?"
"Who, me?" Hook replied, "Look, I don't have
Time for debate." And with a click, he was gone.

Kate Richardson

Remodeling

They met at a home remodeling show
At the Baltimore Convention Hall.
He was selling floor mops and
She demo'd picture hooks.

He said, "It cleans with one swipe."
She said, "You don't need any nails."
They looked at each other then and thought,
Maybe this could work.

He talked to the crowd as he pushed the mop
Through the synthetic dirt
The handi-mop people had trained him to
Sprinkle on the synthetic floor.

She smiled at the crowd as she pushed the hooks
Into the square of drywall
That her handi-hang assistant propped up
While she showed how easy it was.

By 7 o'clock, she was washed out.
He wasn't feeling too sharp. The day was spent.
But still, maybe it was too soon to say.

That night they sat on a concrete wall
Outside the convention hall.
He said, "I'm nothing special. I just do my job."
She was silent, then she said, "I understand. Me, too."

They looked at each other again, and thought,
This will just take some work.
He wouldn't sweep her off her feet,
But she could picture them side by side.

Kate Richardson

Son

The evening sun spilled gold
Across the fields that were so green
They hurt my eyes.

There, in that honeyed light
I saw my son run down to
Meet his father.

Down a gentle slope
To the lower field
Where he tended his plants.

Small boy,
Tiny from birth,
He looked more like ten than thirteen.

But as he ran in big green boots
His childish legs and body lengthened.

I saw him grow foot by foot
Plunging into that slanted spring light.

By the time he reached the lower field, he was a man.

Kate Richardson