

Noelle Kocot

GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO WAIT

*for A.H.*

*Oh, must we dream our dreams  
and have them, too?*

—Elizabeth Bishop

A paper hat transmutes so easily into a paper boat,  
But this doesn't mean that the boat is somehow inferior.  
I was a child once.  
I saw into the deep, blue interior

Of the number four, which is the Holy Spirit who makes  
All things possible and all things matter.  
All things I thought of then,  
Even the letter

Q without the U behind it. And things just settled.  
There was no need to hope  
For any more, except maybe a cigarette, and the thing about cigarettes  
Is that one after another, they're the same. Meanwhile, soap

Dissolves much more quickly than it did in 1970,  
The year that embarrasses me most with its promise of tall,  
Musky, balding Gordons and Dons, with orange, palm-tree expressions,  
And *women* in short, pregnant dresses and ash-black falls.

It will take a freighter  
Of Coppertone to tan them all. Somewhere a library still swells with bean-  
Bag chairs and barefoot, dozing hippies too hooked  
On Marx and Keynes to notice that Miss Breen

Has in fact been able to write her roommate (friend, I presume)  
Into her will with little fuss from the family. Anyway, I hope I've seen  
The last of those backwards  
Fools, except of course for kind-eyed Miss Breen

And her companion, who are coming  
This Thursday for a good, strong cup of German tea. Hopefully, that rag  
Of a newspaper will give us something to talk about before  
We sip. Wait a minute! I must buy some Black Flag

So that the roaches spare our Lorna Doones! O world,  
In all my years of comprehension  
I will never understand their synchronous, immediate  
Flocking in bright formation, then halting suspension

Beneath the sink when I turn on the fluorescent, kitchen, warehouse-  
Like, blaring light just before sun-up. The blue  
Spirit that I once saw radiating out from everything, like a tourist  
In a too-young country, has gone home. And yes, I love you,

Yes, if to love implies more guilt than one alone can harbor.  
So come, the scenery  
Is fine here. The wild blue light still crosses the mountains  
Now and then; somewhere a number four sprouts through the rough greenery.