

Noelle Kocot

SESTINA FOR LIZZETTE

I've always wanted to write a poem about San Francisco,
But I was only there once, and on my honeymoon
No less, and to tell the truth, it sucked.
No, not because I had supposedly just sold my soul
For heterosexual privilege (which, ironically
Enough, I'd had much more of with you, what with your decent parents,

Unlike someone else's parents
Who I am forbidden by law to mention in a poem). San Francisco
Just *felt* bad to me, even with City Lights and all, Michel Foucault ironic
In his kimono, peering from the mirrored cover of his recent honeymoon
With that foppish, prurient, straight-as-an-arrow soul
Of an American professor. The year was 1992, and I was a sucker

For anything purple. Even my wedding dress was as purple as a well-
sucked
Patch of neck a teenager tries to hide from the parents
With a bandanna or a flimsy scarf. In my soul
I knew I was still holding onto our flaccid dream of San Francisco,
Of being honeymoonless
Lesbians together, you the southern and sinewy and sweetly unironic

Muse of my desires, and I the ironical
Expatriate Jew lovingly sucking
The rest of the poison from the macabre remains of the honeymoon
Of signifier and signified. And both sets of parents
Wholeheartedly approved. But in all the San Franciscos
We could conjure in our souls,

Always there was the debris left perhaps by the quake of chiding souls
In the intermediate world, or by some ironic
Sandman reminding us that we were still asleep. San Francisco
Fantasy aside, you have to admit we sucked

As a couple, and weren't able to get anywhere near the havoc our
parents

Had unintentionally and intentionally wreaked. The honeymoon

Was over for us long before it began. Yet it was this honeymoon

That kept and still may keep my sad and blue-eyed soul

Alive, "a simple garden with acres of sky," and the dream of being
parents

Together, you and I, which ironically

Will never happen for me now, as it will take a lifetime to suckle

All the drowned and murdered infants who live in him and me, still
cradled by a hell worse than my worst projections of San Francisco.

I don't understand it when parents say ironic

Things about their children. It seems an extended honeymoon of souls

Sucked through an oblivion of bad land. Goodbye Mom, Dad.

Goodbye

San Francisco.

NOTES

1. The "American professor" at the end of stanza two is James Miller, who wrote the biography *The Passion of Michel Foucault*.
2. The quote "a simple garden with acres of sky" in stanza six is from a Cat Stevens song.