

After the Ballet / Howard Moss

Saratoga Springs, July 4

Where do the dancers go after dancing,
The tumult of the action slowly fading,
Asterisk, bulb, and incandescent
Roman candle rushing into starlight?
Where do the watchers go after dancing,
The crowds of people dim in the stage light?
The rockets of celebration wildly
Flare for a moment, dangle, and darken.

Monogamy / Ira Sadoff

Imagine sleeping in the same bed
with another woman. Any woman.
Think of losing sight of all
perspective, the bed tilting
over like an ocean liner,
the horizon sliding out the window
like a sheet of glass. What if your wife
left you tomorrow? Who would you have
to tell about your wonderful experience?
What if you never lose this need
for sleep? All night you cannot speak—
something is going on in everybody
else's room tonight, the bedsprings
heating up like coils on the stove,
a whole way of life going up
in a mattress. And you are there
and there and there and there.

Odessa / M. R. Doty

The wheels the carts
in Odessa are black the stones
on the beach are black

Odessa the rags full of blood
the soldiers are all home their
bootheels click in the snow

Odessa so much is lost
the candles the spot of blood in the egg
the pale leaves

Odessa the ships
come in when the last smoke
goes out into space
from the last tongue Odessa
the ships come in

And the wheelbarrows
wheel down to the sea
the stones are black the canals
are dirty your face shines in the oil
and the sisters look down
where their faces should be

Black canals
black batteries
rusting in saltwater
and the dark churches swim
up through the water

Odessa the long vigil begins
the votaries are black and shining

The wheelbarrows are nearly there

On the beach
the charred wrists
the silver

Odessa the river
the sirens are blowing

Odessa the hand in the rafters