

2 More Poems by Ricky Garni

EVEN WHEN I AM WITH DUCHAMP, I MISS DUCHAMP

In a commercial for laundry soap in Japan, hundreds and hundreds of women fluffed their bed sheets in a long, serpentine row traversing the mountainside.

Much later, devotees of Marcel Duchamp took his bones and laid them end to end to see how far they would go.

Do you know how far they went? I can tell you this much: they didn't go anywhere nearly as far as all the Japanese women fluffing their bed sheets, traversing the mountainside of Japan in a serpentine row, right before the director says CUT, in Japanese, and then, That's beautiful, he says, really.

••

GUILTY PLEASURE

On Feb. 4, 1974, members of the Symbionese Liberation Army kidnapped Patricia Hearst, granddaughter of newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst, beginning a nearly two-year dramatic saga that captivated the nation.

The 19-year-old Hearst was living with her fiancé in Berkeley, Calif. when armed members of the Symbionese Liberation Army invaded their apartment, beat her fiancé and kidnapped her. It was the opening act in a multi-year saga that had the nation spellbound.

The kidnapping was soon followed by public negotiations during which the SLA denounced the "corporate state" and made a series of demands for distribution of food to the poor, with which the Hearst family clumsily tried to comply. The SLA sent a series of audiotapes on which Patty Hearst denounced her family's efforts; in early April, Hearst announced that she had joined the SLA and adopted the name "Tania," after a confederate of Che Guevara.

On April 15, 1974, the nation was shocked to see photos of "Tania" Hearst, dressed in guerilla garb and carrying a machine gun, participating in a bank robbery with members of the SLA. Hearst was recorded as saying, "I am a soldier of the people's army," according to Court TV. The public struggled with whether Hearst should now be considered primarily a victim or a perpetrator of a crime.

Patty Hearst fell in love with her kidnappers

and I fell in love

with you. It's called

Stockholm Syndrome, even though I thought it was

Munchausen Syndrome, which I enjoy saying a lot more,

because for some reason I think of medieval torture

when I say the words Stockholm Syndrome, rather than,

I imagine, the man who it was named after: Otto Stockholm.

No such luck. No Otto. It was actually a bank robbery,

in dreary Stockholm, Sweden, where the usual happened,

that "primitive gratitude for the gift of life"

which one experiences when held at gunpoint.

Interestingly enough, you also feel that way

when you fall in love—you go primitive and are happy

to be alive.

I like to call it “Louis Louis” Syndrome –

the beat is fast and hard, à la El Loco Cha Cha,
the FBI investigate your words for obscenity,
and who the hell knows what you are saying
and everyone thinks it is something different.

Only your true love knows for sure
and Stockholm Syndrome prevents her

from revealing that love.

What love? I love my life, I love you.

Now I fell in love with you
because you looked
like Patty Hearst.

I remember telling you that when I first met you,
because I was astounded at the coincidence
that you were ordering a Symbionese Liberation Slinger
from a bartender who looked just like Jimmy Carter,
from Plains Georgia in a bar in Stockholm, Sweden.

“The tie that binds captive to captor”

although I noticed that lately Patty Hearst
has blond hair, while I am an alcoholic.

My favorite drink is not, in fact,
the SLS, but the more emotionally reputable
Sagatiba Bikini Martini. Patty Hearst enjoys a cup
of raspberry zinger—it's her 'guilty pleasure.'

So, what would have happened
if she had made such a radical change
in her life in, say, 1973, before any of this happened?

I remember those wonderful video shots of Patty Hearst,
heiress, kidnap victim
turned terrorist,
machine gun in hand,
entering the bank
in a Symbionese beret.

She looked better than ever –
even trendy –

and the picture was in the newspaper all summer,
the summer where I began to equate crossword puzzles
and confusion,

with love.

Twenty years passed, Patty Hearst married a bodyguard or two,
I then, finally, fell in love with you, I bought a radio.

Things were never the same. And then things changed.

I would love to say more about this, but it is impossible.

I can't focus. I haven't had a drink since,
well, forever–honestly, I don't drink–
that's not the problem. It's just the radio.

Clarence Carter is singing "Strokin" now
on the radio. It's an old radio,
kind of a sea foam green.
It's as old as love.

And I like to listen.

And if you listen carefully,
the next thing you know,

the police are shining their light in Clarence Carter's face

while he is strokin' with his woman on the back seat of the car
until she is sassyfied, and I, far, far away, don't know, never will
what to do with, without you—

my syndrome—

my love—

captured

by my side.

••