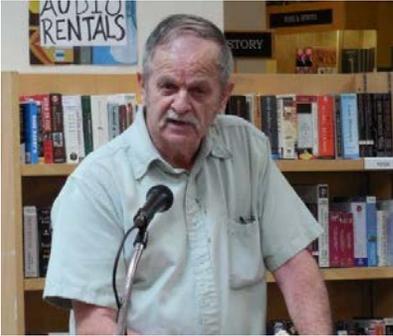


A. D. Winans – Five Poems



Feature Poet

Lost Summer Of Love

We made love in this house
That long-ago Summer of Love
Here in the Haight Ashbury
The sun beating its head against
The window shades
Of the old Victorian structure
Where we jammed on the floor
All-day and night
Posters of Janis Joplin
And Jimmy Hendrix on the walls
An empty six-pack
A burned-out roach for company
Making music with our bodies
As the nine-to-five crowd prepared
Their death march to work
Passing this house decades later
Janis and Hendrix long gone
The months the years piled-up like litter
I watch a cat in the alley
It's back raised
Stakeout its territory
Visions of that Lost Summer of Love
Flicker inside my head ignites a fire
Extinguished quick as a blink
Death crawls sideways up the banister
Steals my memories carries them away
In an empty satchel

Angel Of Death

Strange this trip back in time
Not with flesh and blood
But in the disguise of words
The muscles the cells changing
Dying and yet somehow surviving
Traveling through a warped time tunnel
Through an origin you cannot remember
Because there is no you to remember it

I walk behind my shadow
Shed the years like a burlesque dancer
Sheds her clothes
I who have never called myself a poet
Never clothed myself in consonants
Vowels similes or metaphors
Planting words on the page
Like a florist prepares a bridal banquet
A tender arrangement of flesh and bone
At war with the demons who leave behind
A Custer massacre of words

In the twilight of insanity
I race the clock like a hungry dog
Sniffs a gourmet meal
Left feeling like the last sentinel
The last paying customer
At the last movie show
All these years an explorer
Set out to discoverer a new world
Blindfolded without map or compass

The Holy Grail a shameless slut
Spits out bits and pieces of the puzzle
The poems arrive like a migration of birds
Poems mated with a full blood moon
Left cooking these strange images
Like a fry cook sweating over a greasy grill

I wake in the morning with volcanic dreams
Rambling inside my head
My eyes a heat-seeking missile hones in for the kill
left feeling like a junkie overcome with tremors

A matador waving a red flag
In the face of a raging bull
growing old was not supposed to be this way
dreams reduced to confetti
fall like hard rain to the ground
stepped on over or around

the angel of death lurks in the wings
does a slow two-step shuffle
like a gypsy selling her wares
in the shadow of a tattooed dawn

Poem For Gary Snyder

When I was publishing Second Coming
I traveled to Sacramento to make a pitch
for a small press publishing grant
Confident my chances would be good
with you as the newly appointed Chair

To my surprise, I heard you say
poets should not rely on grants
that they should apply like others
for a bank loan

At the break
I followed you to the Men's room
watched you unzip step up to the urinal
and take a whiz

that's when I made my move
asked you what bank was going
to take poems for collateral
I thought maybe you had been
in the mountains too long
maybe all that chopping wood
had taken its toll

I could see you were uneasy
I mean a man has his pride
but I wasn't about to give up
and pressed on with my case

It was not the longest piss in the world
or was it the shortest somewhere in between

but long enough for me to make my point

When you were through
you zipped up your pants
looked me in the face and said
“You have balls.”

Two of them I said
the last time I looked.
He left laughing
two months later
I received a \$5000 publishing grant

A Call To Arms

You can't escape it
Your remote control is wed to it
Local and cable channels feed it to you
Like meat thrown into a tiger cage

News of wars and pending wars
Reel you in like a doomed fish
You become part of it whether
You want to or not

You don't have to be on the frontlines
To feel the wounds see the blood
Taste the carnage
Your parents and grandparents lived it
Willed it to you
As their parents before them

The dog feels it each time
He wags his tail
The cat hides under the bed
But can not escape it

Walt Whitman walked the battlefields
Bandaged the wounds of the fallen
William Carlos Williams saw it in
The faces of dying patients
General Grant tried to drink the pain away

The disease can't be defeated
The Pope is powerless
The President embraces it
The First Lady dances with it
The vampire Congress feeds off it

It's a cancer that eats away at you
Sucks you down like quicksand
Admirals and Generals run through
The fields harvesting the dead
Politicians rattle their blood-stained swords
In the midnight oil of democracy
Ballistic missiles pointed at the stars
The firing squad put on alert
Petrified standing like mannequins
In a death field
The businessman's money tree
Bends with the weight
A nation in slave chains
Disguised as freedom
Turn on the TV open your eyes
It's all there to see

Hospital Poem

so many hospitals with so many names
of so many Saints it makes the heart bleed
Saint Francis Saint Mary's Saint Joseph
Saint Luke's, Saint this one and Saint that one

So many people lined-up waiting to die
hacking coughing spitting-up their insides
so many nurses with dollar bill eyes
strutting their stuff into the parking lot
too tired for love too tired to laugh
overcome with fatigue

so many doctors so sad they can't be God
hide their disappointment in cocktail glasses
or between the legs of the angels of mercy

so many cardiac arrests so many dead-on-arrivals
so many John Doe's so many Jane Doe's
how many only the business office knows
and the security guards and housekeeping staff
and the accountants and janitors
and the gray-haired lady volunteers
with eyes worn as an Indian Head penny
and the young nurses with bodies like orange blossoms
who walk it on by your door and my door
worn down stepped on they eat and sleep
return each day to walk the halls like vampires
with pained fingernails that slice the flesh to the bone

the doctors the nurses the orderlies in white
the priests the patients and loved ones
all seeking a private audience with God
here behind these sterile walls where
death stalks the halls with panting breath
licking the crevice of the soul

death the noble savage
death the avenging sadist leaves behind her scars
plays out the game to the bitter end
a giant hearse among a sea of compact cars

A. D. Winans is an award-winning native San Francisco poet and writer. He is the author of over sixty books and chapbooks of poetry and prose. He edited and published the acclaimed *Second Coming Magazine/Press* from 1972-1989. Awards include a PEN National Josephine Miles Award for Excellence in Literature, a PEN Oakland Lifetime Achievement Award, and a Kathy Acker Award in poetry and publishing.