

Abigail George – Two Poems

This is why the sea does not glitter

There's nothing as beautiful
as the newspaper man eating
fresh plums. The woods, mushrooms,
potatoes. The vibrations of
foliage. Daylight. Glory. A
tender swarm. The triumph of
an athlete. The redemption of a
sinner. Spring found in the
desert. A Saturday morning.
Leaf. Oh, sacred leaf! Universal winter. Cat. The action of rope found
in blood.
The shadow of a woman found
in the venerable wild. There's nothing
as beautiful as deep-blue love.
The echo of a bird. An icy wind
that freezes everything green but the
gap of time. A page in a book.
Golden people. Fire. Bright places. Novel places. Iron faces. The outline
of a lonely season and hills.

There's nothing as beautiful
as the woman in the photograph.
The bride of high summer days.
The confession of a sinner.
The perfumed juice of a pear.
Bird. Field. A lovesick climate. The blessing of an emerald day.
Kite-flying. The fabric of a stream.
The hidden wings of a child. The swell of a rosebud's mute bloom.
Thread of an owl through the air.
The lengthened passage north.
Sinking-gathering-maturing cells of
sunburnt flesh and bone. The Mediterranean-blue
sky. The tarnished transaction
of vital star meeting black hole.

No, there's nothing as beautiful.
I come to life in my sister's Cape Town flat.
It is raining men and women
And When the radiant sun comes out it Rains golden. I think of people
Who only say things to be
polite. Of how before I do things now,

I have to wait for the tiredness
to lift. I think of my flesh and
blood. How everything around
me is fragile and connected to God.
Sometime I think of the hospital room I found myself in when I was
barely twenty. That was
Before the renal unit at the hospital where I was born. Now,
I eat for three and four and five.

Couples

When you are too much alone
with your own thoughts you go
mad if there is no one to distract
you from your cave, from your
books. No children crying out, 'mummy, mummy, mummy'. When there is no
husband who wants
and needs your attention in a
desperate way. I have no idea how to run a house
like my mother did but I do know
that I cannot blame my mother
for that. The sole responsibility
of that lies with me and it haunts
me. It hurts me. I was going 'to
go that way'. I always had it in me. Just didn't
think I was going to last this

long. I've come out here to be
myself. I have come out here to
write the great post-apartheid South African novel. I sit outside by
the fireplace in a
patio chair. Rusty nails are coming out of it. I think too much.

That's the trouble with me.
The trouble with madness is
that you think too much. I
let the sun shine on my face and try
not to think too much. In a
land far away, people are on
the move as fast as mating rituals in the animal kingdom.

They are getting out of bed,
waking their children, taking showers, fixing breakfasts,
fixing their hair (in that order).
Writing lists, drawing up itineraries, and like me they
are surely writing out what
their priorities for the day are.

And later, everything around
me is covered with an intense
aura of pink light. The smell of
incense burning. He is back.
His hair wet (from a ten-minute
shower). I can't shut him out
no matter how hard I try. He
is my education. He is my companion guide to angst. I know when he leaves
He will not leave a note telling
me where he has gone, what time
he will be returning. He will have vanished into
thin air like the thin man. Please
love me I said in my youth and
my twenties. Disguise yourself in any way, shape,
and fish. Form, variety, tree, bulb,
flower, seed and I will accept it.

Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee **Abigail George** is a South African blogger, essayist, poet and short story writer. She is the recipient of two grants from the National Arts Council in Johannesburg, one from the Centre for the Book and another from the Eastern Cape Provincial Arts and Culture Council. She briefly studied film at the Newtown Film and Television School in Johannesburg.