

## Patricia Gomes – Three Poems

### The Tail of a Comet

I could tell you  
about the night  
I was called  
a nigger-lover  
by two white men  
in a passing car.

I could tell you  
about being chased  
for blocks  
by that car,  
a green Mercury Comet,  
the bumper held on with rope,  
its engine revving  
insults  
under streetlights.

I could tell you  
about the knot on my head  
when the beer bottle  
they threw at me connected,  
splashing me with foulness.

I could tell you  
that the first time those words  
were directed at me  
they came from the foul mouth  
of my father.

I could tell you  
plenty, but I can't make you feel  
the rage,  
shame,  
guilt,  
toxicity,  
helplessness,  
nor the pain that continues  
to pass through  
my orbit  
fifty years later.

## **When Jenny Baked**

He takes the slice of pumpkin pie  
out to the back porch in the crisp October air,  
and thinks store bought is never as good  
as the real deal.

A squirt of canned whipped cream,  
only slightly tastier than a #10 envelope.

Five o'clock sunset.

He daydreams gunboats,  
Beechnut gum,  
artillery fire,  
the cloying jungle mist,  
and the sounds she made against his chest  
when they made love  
on sheets of yellow roses,  
clothesline dried.

The nights grow long.

He lights a cigarette, the last for the night  
out on the back porch  
in the crisp October air,  
their old grey cat at his slippered feet.  
He thinks he might just outlive  
the mangy beast, but prays  
he won't.

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## **Cannibalism in the Garden District** (based on the play, *Suddenly, Last Summer* by Tennessee Williams)

The Venus Fly Trap  
stands tall, stoic,  
and intolerant  
in the Venable greenhouse.  
Clandestinely planted  
behind Sweet William  
and blood red coleuses,  
the absence of sanity  
within the glass confines  
of its universe  
is as meaningless to it as it is to the fly  
about to be caught

and devoured  
by its natural hunger  
A hunger no less strong,  
no less natural  
than Sebastian's appetite  
for the love of another man.

This cycle is not lost on Violet; steadfast  
and proper Violet,  
who seeks to negate  
the influence of chaos into their privileged  
and proper macrocosm,  
where brandy is warmed  
and tea is served  
exactly at four o'clock.  
It's humid in the greenhouse, cloying,  
and overgrown,  
She walks the rows of stone paths  
through the lush greenery  
contemplating growth,  
and the splintering  
of a grown son's adulation  
for his mother.  
She can do no more than frame  
fragments of poetic memory,  
gilded eternally  
in a mind decaying  
as rapidly the life span of lilacs.

The former two-term Poet Laureate of New Bedford, Massachusetts (2014-2021), author and playwright **Patricia Gomes** has been published in numerous literary journals and anthologies, including New England Horror Writers anthology, *Wicked Women*. A 2018 and 2008 Pushcart Prize nominee, and twice nominated for a Rhysling Science Fiction award, Gomes is the author of four chapbooks. Ms. Gomes recent publications include *Alien Buddha Press*, *Star\*Line*, *Muddy River Review*, *Pink Plastic*, *Sledgehammer*, *Apex and Abyss*. Ms. Gomes is the co-founder of the GNB Writers Block as well a member of the SciFi Poetry Association, New England Horror Writers, the Horror Writers Association and the Massachusetts Poetry Society.