

Divorce

Awarded 1984-1985 Rachel Sherwood Poetry Prize

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He knocked on my door with iron knuckles and a plaster smile,
explaining:

"I'm leaving/ marriage ruining my job/ you never do what I/
can't keep my bushes trimmed in the yard/ and you know
how I need sex/ got to divorce."

I shook my head. It turned bruise green realizing something.
It fell off and landed on the desk near my typewriter.
My right arm flew out the window in rage.

"sell houses/ you half/ we'll split dishesheetstv couch —
grubby anyway/ stuff you never would replace."

My stomach became stone, dropped to the floor,
rolled down the hall and out into the street, resting
in the cool trickle of the gutter.
An ear left my severed head and began typing poetry.

"I'm keeping/ investments important to me/ don't touch
my profits/ But Anna is —"

The other ear joined and they typed louder.

"my main concern/ lovely child/ support
one year/ that's all."

Spiders poured from my vagina down to the floor
weaving secrets in red, then crawled away
and hid among the books in the case.

"I can't stay/ so you go — final decision/
I speak calmly/ expect you to do the same."

My feet stood there, just toes stiffening
like I'd been standing on ice for a long time.

The newly typed page began chanting sounds
he had never heard before. He listened.
Smoke rose from his ears, mouth, privates.
He fell in a heap of ashes.
His head rested like a dull marble on top,
glazed eyes looking up.

My left arm slammed the door. My head yelled:
feed the cats when you get up,
they're scratching at the window.
They've knocked over your geranium.
I went to gather up the parts of me.