

## SHARON THESEN / Poems

### A Lovely Day

It's a perfect summer day. Blue, blue sky; some plump  
white clouds; a breeze. Not a scorcher, not one you'd  
mind in any way. I found a near-new softball at the park  
this morning behind the dugout & holding its white weight  
remembered long-ago  
days on the diamond for the Cosmic League—  
and before that watching my dad pitch for the Royalite team  
summer nights at Riverview Park--  
the clapping at the home run,  
the guy on third base  
taking his time trotting in, the talk  
on the diamond, my happiness when Dad struck out player  
after player as the light in the hills began to  
remove itself from the scoreboard and the willows  
filled with the night breeze from the river.

## Review

Icy steps, a coat  
of honey on a wound, voice  
warbling and too rich, makes me  
want to run away,  
the froth and itch, the art—

## Occupation

For Tom Cone

I'm still wondering. It's a stallion  
of a challenge which I am  
unafraid of meeting. To horse  
around, though occupied, always  
in the middle of something,  
a territory I'm taking  
up with myself, the occupier,  
and my henchmen helicopters,  
barbed wire and the watchfulness  
the occupied don't like of course  
but I believe it belongs to me  
anyway or that I am the real  
owner and they, misfits and  
accidents, stole it from me  
earlier.

Occupied, preoccupied, in  
the middle of something wild  
like a Halloween party where souls  
dance cheek to other's cheek.

In the middle of something looking  
in all directions. Me the occupier,  
and the occupied by continuous  
thinking and my soul  
or *ba*, whatever rides in the  
boat later on. Or occupied by you  
my husband, your toes and  
feet down there near mine.

“Don’t save anything addressed to  
occupant” she said whose mail  
I was picking up. If I’m an occupant  
should I not keep myself? And return to  
being in the middle of something,  
the space I occupy all the time,

occipital

my occupation: in the middle of a long thought  
which is to live.

## The Celebration

Was it a poorly attended event, a celebration  
no one felt like celebrating? Was there no  
live music? Was there  
a table with small empanadas  
and cubes of cheese, another with bottles of wine?  
Had the winter day subsided into early  
evening before the rush hour, white wine  
larking in your bloodstream as you  
walk to the parking lot? The prawns  
had been large and plump, sweet.  
Could you have eaten a dozen?  
And besides, it turned out  
that so and so had been born in  
a small Eurasian town. Which of the following  
instruments were generally played by popular persons?

- (a) accordion
- (b) banjo
- (c) piano

Was crockery flung at the mantel? Did they dance  
with throats proud and uplifted?

Were they enjoined to celebrate some government policy or other?  
Daycare day, eat broccoli day, safety day! Apology day! Not worrying  
about anything day! Old guys driving vintage cars in the slow lane! Young guys at  
the Keg on a big night out! Catholics playing six cards each at  
the bingo hall! Insomniacs fretting with camomile in the kitchen!  
Old men weeping in the parks! Boys sobbing in armies! Moloch, Moloch,  
celebration in Moloch!! Travellers picking at room service chicken pot pies!

Underpaid clerks helpful at the insurance office! Hermaphrodite trout!  
Box stores with irritable cashiers! Pepsi salesmen analyzing flow charts!  
Grandmas eyeing the sherry! Orangutans grieving in zoos! Secretaries!  
Undertakers!  
Robots on the telephone! Oral hygienists! English professors defeated by poesie!  
Celebrate! Celebrate!

The moon keeps me company all the way home, her dark smile and brocade blouse.  
We see her coming over the hills and duck into  
the collar of our coat. We know perfectly well we could use a little  
of her scorn, her glamour.

## The Gambling Table

I discarded the five of hearts  
He replied with the seven of wands

My clubs were black and heavy  
They fit the palm of my hand

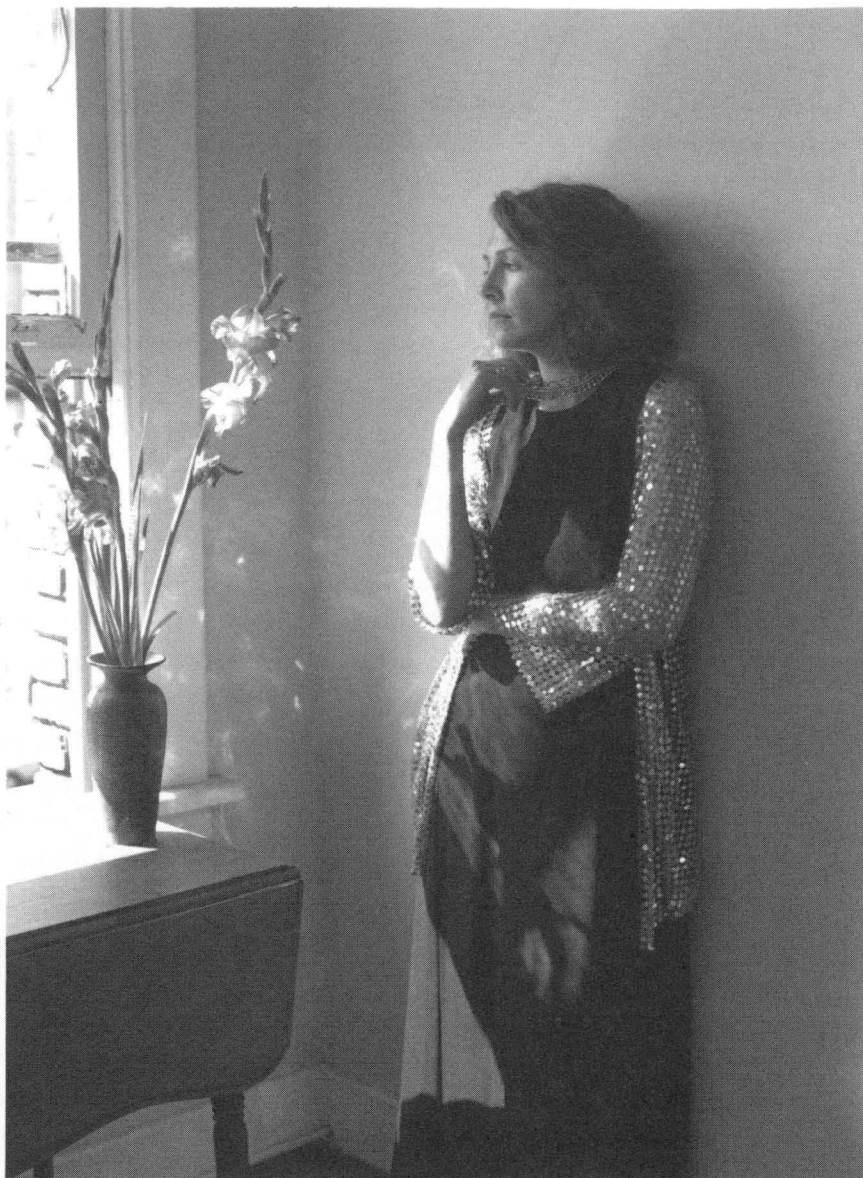
In no particular order  
They were laid out like a princess in a coma

The sums and the odds were reckoned  
Towers of plastic disks shoved here & there

Like history, i.e. bloodlines and factions  
Riding horses and trying for a boy

After which gunfire and revised treaties  
Eventually follow. But here

In the big casino, in exurbia, in the lurch of cosmos  
Nothing means nothing.



Sharon Thesen  
*Photographer unidentified*