

Ramona Weeks / THREE POEMS

THE TIE

Some prized ones are called
“grenadine” and are dyed
with a tint akin
to pomegranate syrup.
They are tied with knots
simple as a spider’s slipstream
of air,

 fluid gestures
like a downpour
drawn together
by something timeless.
Deep in your closet, silk snags
on its own light
and frays among boards
redolent of trees,
striking red matches.

A necktie becomes party
to your hanging.
You
choose well.

SWIMMING

Remember the buoyant
feeling of water on a summer afternoon? Fins
webbing through blue water, you see eternal

light diffuse and spread on the pool's surface
as you emerge into a citrus spotlight,
eyelashes doubly wet, squinting at sun. Leaves

are collapsible brown tents edging the tiles.
A dragonfly skims the water's skin,
a moth in hope and harness. You propel

yourself toward a liferaft as if flying
on theatrical wires, hair slick as Peter Pan
intent upon windows and a ticking clock.

Your back grows hot; there is a drift
of sheets, a hum of bees in syringa.
They hover close on thirsty wings,

a continental shelf of drowsiness
as you take a deep breath and sink beneath
the shadow of the diving board. A white and blue rope

wakes you again. It spans the turquoise water,
guarding you from sudden depths,
plastic floats rotating like white ducks.

You can dodge, plunge under them,
and fly toward the rotunda of far steps.
Near the umbrella table is your zebra towel.

Upholstered velour, its loops are ember warm.
Take off the webbed feet; you are an amphibian
no longer. Blinking, you see carrier pigeons

of clouds overhead, wonder how no collisions
happen as you breathe, wake, and eat,
indulge life's necessary habits. Sleeping is a swim

on pinions; slashing through underbrush is waking up,
portaging from one river to another. On final evenings,
herons are fishing and you have time to watch.

AIR FOR MUSIC BOXES

“Sarilda, quit mourning. Of course your heart is aching; hasn’t it always, one time or another? That’s partly what our hearts are for.”

Remember the musical powder box with the ballerina, the one who danced *en pointe* and twirled to *Tarentella*, dark hair shiny and marcelled, one arm upraised, one leg flexed beneath a wide blue mushroom skirt? She gradually slowed her pirouette as the key ticked. The mechanism lost a spring; the dancer would no longer turn: merely gazed toward a gold circle painted on her wrist. The pink gauze of the powder dome still wafted perfume and a tune, but the ballerina faltered, trapped in a spotlight of paralysis.

“That’s my fate someday, sure as you’re born.”
And Grandma began cleaning frosted tulips on her looking glass.

Once Grandma owned another music box: two skaters and a varsoviana. The little man in *lederhosen* was the first to break; then the lady’s kirtle and her torso snapped. Only their legs kept lifting, skates stroking mirrored ice, until she broke them off.

Remember Grandmother,
her trapunto cushions and bird-feather pictures, plaster cast
of Andersen's Little Mermaid; how she dangled a lorgnette,
wore cameos, smelled of violets? Remember
her calico cat? The sound of her pump organ
when she played hymns in the night? And when the doctor came
and said she'd died— remember that? You curled up on her shoes
but never wept. You hugged the ostrich boa,
shedding after years, remembered the skaters, but were too old
to believe her stories about heaven.

Does something ache?

Play the pump organ, wheezing memento she promised
to leave you in her will. Wasn't there a song about robins
who brought strawberry leaves to bury two frozen orphans
in the forest once they were lost forever and lay dead
in three-foot drifts of snow? Is that what snow is for?

The skating music dies, but you must go forward with the dancer.
Something must mean everything, preferably at once.