

Irene Koronas

Sample1

my father

inside a shoebox

little steel taps pasted

on cardboard

sky blue painted

on the outside

and wind blows

if someone opens

Sample 2

turn everything over

I leaf through pages,

smell woods' thick moss

each day's smattering

return you to that

beginning repetition

snow flakes accumulate

red shovel leans,

plastic disks used as sleds,

we stand on the upper porch

watching white lace curtain the sky,

tree limb falls on our car. we need to find

insurance papers and someone

to cut branches

to big to push aside. Storms

excerpting language, fierce and bitter

the ice house men

turn everything over.

no one invited me

I leave. Reference cozy knit poems

so profound I bleed, I believe every drop

enables sleep

watching television, holding a sausage

against the screen. He cuts it up but never

tries to bake the stuffed circumstances

i'm growing tired of poetry that

returns you to that turn
that turns everything over

old plates from china
mattresses
scramble eggs
french toast

the bloody pad churning fear
light rain washes.
at my age you'd think

i'd gotten over comparisons
or regret or the last time I fell asleep
holding his head.

my open window view
a roof lodged between sky and gutters
three evergreens slump

snow heavy branches break
turned over by mother
my leather boots caress my legs

lush warm breeze pushing cold air
the black Victorian vent
the road to Emmaus

I can do nothing without my God book

Sample 3

she was grateful for the women in the room

for the pineapple bedspread

the marshmallow desert

the blue jay's squawk

the evergreens sway

the cat who sat by the stove

the women tying stitches in knots

the rug embroidered with orange red threads

the women who girdle their thoughts

she use to sit on my bed

crammed against a wall

next to my sisters bed but that bed was

my second bed, my first bed was a bunk bed.

I slept on top. we had no idea we were poor

until she came to our home with her angora

sweater buttoned all neat and baby blue.

nancy was not as wealthy as I thought.

always alone, she refused to defecate

and landed in a hospital tomb.

I never saw nancy again

there was linda, petite and blonde
thin as any paper doll. her elderly parents
kept everything clean, they
really had money, giving linda a red convertible.
still in high school, she met a young man
who died in his room. linda moved to belmont
then to dover, the last I heard,
she became a social worker

barbara, my best friend, read
all the dirty parts from her mother's books,
died soon after she married and had one son

so many girls in my room
playing with dolls and playing doctor
I feel sick thinking about it

boys came kissing
while the bottle spun, spurning
tighter clothes, clothes
my parents forbid
ed wasn't as smart as me,
that made me think I was less than him

I searched the library shelves
finding gone with the wind, artist
susan valadon, the first woman

to inspire my creative bend. the brushes
I stole from the art store, because I looked
so innocent, I'd saunter out the front door
pockets full of oil paint and sundry things,
turning our attic into a paris garret,
canvas against unfinished wood

that's where joan came in.
my mother thought she gave me
those tubes of titanium white, gesso,
crimson and jet black. her parents
let her paint their hall walls, sent her to art school
to italy, she came back once. last I heard
she owned an antique store

notebooks were easier to get,
mother could afford to buy me one.
writing my angst and hormone instincts
with a pink ink pen

grateful for the women in the rooms in the books
all my learning centuries ago
it took awhile to get myself unhooked
from historic men, picasso, rimbaud
the pear trees in the side yard
the motorcycles bad boys rode
the black clothes I insisted on wearing long
the need to get married to get out of the house

all the feral cats hit by cars

the cat was asleep on the rug

Sample 4

from the greek to mean

seems reasonable. something about voices

on contraptions, the drip of sparse poems

slit my wrists

I can't write

oh God, such bullshit I tell myself my poetry sucks

no one loves me, even the cat avoids my recitations

woo is me, let me try pressing, buzzing edges click,

high heel shoes thud, my father's shoe polish

stain fingers hammering nails into rubber, leather soles

stitched on a long machine.

again a gain. wallpaper roses in neat designs,

yellow sagging lines blunt cut words. quick ramble

on young girl's eyes lined with kohl, she talks on cell phone,

yeah. oh yeah, I'm keeping my room clean. umm, yeah, umm.

hundreds of birds drop from the sky.

locus swarm over his farm, clearing fields blackish clouds.

swallows nest. father's mother died while he's in america

his aunt wrote poetry. I allow myself ten minutes

of despair. so many yearlings grazing upon green meadows.

if I were sane I'd say I'm doing what I'm suppose to. jotting

loquacious. using i n g s. listening, voicing, separating, lying,

resting, flying, lately I turn off the radio and television. lately
sky pastels flatten my view, crimping, pulling mornings. are
there any flat lip women not perfumed. are there any men
not inflated with gathering flames, force. gently refuse, or else.

stein or dickinson or niedecker, even Jesus

I like Him the most, because He loves when one is

puffed-up, structuring, betrothing, because

love that's not me. I tend to less grumbling, rounding

out my verbs. inging voices at one pitch.

winging

wren

ten

fend

winter turns

terns swallow worm

can't con a con man before breakfast. break fast.

seven pancakes. its so smooth the glass cup in my hand

despair

lovely as a bird

Sample 5

Why is it so hard to be present

[afraidable]

slipping from a dream

icicles catapult along the pavement
knocking on their garden door
knocking for quiet entry

where roses still crack
where eve hums, adam relieves himself.
I don't want to be in their garden
just something similar

out of this under-world
I want enough money to shop
to wear silk underwear
smash glasses by a fireplace

dance where hydrangea grow
with fat purple grapes.
why is it so hard to be present
to except my own poverty

my own spiritual or otherwise
poverty, rolling down small side streets
only I care what happens when

a friend bursts out from
the bottom drawer, my bureau
stuffed with all my scattered seeds.
I start to dream again

falling icicles knock on dreadful frogs
even adam and eve want new underwear
discontent with what they have

the thick tangled gamblers
tap dancing at the dog tract
sewing up the seams of my life
with bookmakers, their waxy thread

surface glides easily through
the opening. Patterns set before me.
all the different cloth books,
even wounds sewn along my collar

join the underpinning

father lined leather boots for
soldiers who invaded his island.
a crazy quilt spread under warm sky,
threads, buttons fastening old appearances.
God's not limited to street salt.

When father became an ellis island name
his accent put our hands over our hearts,
we sang God bless America, and all the accented
adults learning to speak english, their children
playing kick ball, doing embroidery, lace
collars hanging out on clothes lines

we interpret our place

dreaming about driving around in Cadillacs

pontiacs, studebakers, long cars I thought

would roll backward when on a hill.

like everyone else we played cards

cooked lamb, went to church, worked

in factories worked workers work

when mother became

her family hardly spoke, speaking just enough

to get paid, serving each other the boys did less.

She taught us what she was taught. Work hard

try to get more off the bone. Boil everything.

when I focus on the present

I notice how the past

is stitched to pockets

how salt keeps me from skidding,

slipping under