

The Abiko Quarterly

with James Joyce *FW* Studies

Aki Fall 1995 Ragwords -- *Finnegans Wake*

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LAUREL

in loving memory of Erica Marx

Never by lightning struck
The lovely lady Laurel stands -
Poets alone that green may pluck
And hold her Wisdom in their hands

Their seeing eye is single,
Their bodies full of light -
Spirit and Nature mingle
And generate delight

The wounded wounder suffers
But heals the sufferer,
Comforting words he offers
As suffering he draws near

Mother and Father reconciled,
The Child within the rose,
Adam soiled and Eve defiled
Embrace eternal foes

Sweetness issues from the lion,
Maggots like peacocks' eyes
Or bees upon Mount Sion
That quell all human sighs

And all the while the Laurel,
A lovely Virgin stands,
Who shoots no earthly quarrel
But the green leaves in her hand

Venice
4th December 1969

Peter Russell

Let a thousand and one writers flourish in The AQ!



*Boydell
45.317*

Inside, the best from Japan!

Aspice quod felis attraxit!

Here Comes Everybody!

Deborah Lynn Owen

Grieving #9: The Language of the Sun

The vine struggles.
It does not understand, stretches
up but finds no answer, only
more wanting.

The vine can't help but strive,
can't help but
expect to come upon an answer
in one of the directions. It must
then reach out into all.

It reaches even when weary.
So many directions attempted.
So much green offered to the sun.
So much ache from stretching
out while rooted down.

The sun draws it
up, relentlessly.
The vine finds
no form for its pain
in the sun's language of desire.

The sun explains nothing.

Deborah Lynn Owen

On Lying

In the summertime tree leaves are lying.
They breathe with their green.
No wind can remove or refute them.
Leaves brag their strength: their green; they lie.

In the summertime leaves display green
as if it were their own, as if they weren't really
brown beneath, all along; red below
their false green, waiting. Leaves pretend with
green surfaces in the summer, as if we wouldn't
see the truth soon enough.

Soon enough the tree senses the ground's first frost,
the reluctance of water; the tree no longer
wants the sun to take from it.
The tree then mutes the language it shared with the sun;
it gags and starves the leaves at their stems
in order to drive away their false cover.

We see the leaves were lying.
We see the sepia underneath.
The true cast of leaves is yellow and weak.
True leaves are as weak as they are stiff.
A breeze detaches them easily.

In the summertime a tree fills its branches with lies.
The leaves are then profuse and strong.
But is it the lying that brings them strength.
When the truth appears, it crumbles them.

Lafayette, Louisiana

Deborah Lynn Owen

Sand and Mountains

Some mountains are like sand
you step on and
the wind moves
in whatever direction
it wants.

Sand shaped like
mountain is called a dune,
and a mountain that rolls into
the ocean is a beach.

You don't really know sand
when you walk on it; like mountains
it is much older than you
know how to count.

Deborah Lynn Owen

Menstruating #6: Medicated

Everything dissolves.
It has hit your bloodstream
like a Greek hero
and dissolved the battle for you.
Even the memory of the
pain has liquefied and drained
out your pores. At last
you may leave all thinking behind.
All muscles have gone slack
and no longer know they are muscles.
Your legs are bags of bath water,
your fingers, limp pixie sticks.

The invading pain has retreated, and
your insides have become a party hall.
You are holding a worshipful celebration
for the Greek hero
who's rescued you, pulled you out
of the rubble of the fallen city
and clubbed you senseless.

You lie, outside the city, and smile.
He's turned you to liquid, wrapped in skin,
and you leak tears for him
in utter joy
and thankfulness.

Lafayette, Louisiana

Deborah Lynn Owen

Sugar from Bread

I.

I chew bread until it's sweet
and has fooled my mouth
You tell me to eat fruit if I want sugar.
I know, though, that it isn't the same type of sweet.
I don't mention this.

II.

I will myself to forget
the language you speak.
I don't write down the things you promise.
I listen to your words as if they were only music,
a string of notes without definition.
You leave without saying good-bye.
I have forgotten your word for that anyway.

III.

We have both seen the
coarse leaves and stems of
the blind weeds that flourish inside me.
You don't ask me if they hurt.
I know you are now free of them,
even though you are too polite to say so.

Deborah Lynn Owen

IV.

I call to you to admire
the Camellia branches I've arranged
in the glass vase. You coo. You compliment.
I am pleased and bursting. You nod.
We know we cannot stand here, admiring,
for much longer.

V.

You are distant, and I am undernourished.
I bake bread. You do not want to help me.
I put flour on your hands anyway.
You fall asleep in a chair. I do not let my salt eyes
wet the bread.