

Stephen Bett: Three Glosa Poems

Lewis Warsh: Dancing Up a Ruse

Rousseau said something about something.

He said something.

He said:¹ I'm going to give you a fat lip.

The doorman held the umbrella

Superficial Things—Lewis Warsh (with nods to l.W. & Un/Wired)²

Rousseau said something about something.

My father shortened his name from Warshafsky

when he was in his twenties. Maybe it was

2 a.m. at Anne & Lewis's, which is one for the money old son

He said something.

Pepper told me he was gay on the

train from Boston to New York.

One track / One ticket / One way

He said: I'm going to give you a fat lip.

But he didn't say (mid-Atlantic voice)

¹ Sic

² This glosa is almost entirely a collage, or pastiche (or mash-up), of two Lewis Warsh poems, glossed lines from the Berrigan & Prynne glosas, & a minimalist poem from *Un/Wired* featuring an epigraph from a Warsh novel.

don't forget to warsh your hands old boy
there's a good chap, the old upchuck trick

The doorman held the umbrella

for the dark figure with the fat lip in the rain
said he was dancing up a ruse to snag a late train
speeding at 4 a.m. trying not to buck your grain, rattle your chain

Phyllis Webb: The Spit

And spit

give me water for spit.

Then give me

a face.

*Solitary Confinement*³—Phyllis Webb

And spit

broken glass

for shards

to speak

give me water for spit.

Gloss this mal du

doute ... never

was spat out

Then give me

ash in time

to witness

³ This section of Webb's poem starts, "Let my tongue hang out / to remember the thirst for life. / Let my tongue hang out / to deliver itself / of the bitter curd. / And spit / ..."

its burn

a face.

To spite

itself

still

Lew Welch: Which Planet Are You (Currently) On?

Draw a circle a hundred feet round.

Inside the circle are

300 things nobody understands, and, maybe

nobody's ever really seen.

Step out onto the Planet—Lew Welch (with nods to earlier glosas)

Draw a circle a hundred feet round.

Big enough to hold that old

Franz Kline line⁴ ... in a forest

of Zen-inflected absence

Inside the circle are

you sitting still? expecting a truck?

Locked in snug as a bug

(in a toppled chestnut tree

300 things nobody understands, and, maybe

one twins another, this freedom bit

that satori hit

& which dream pops first

⁴ This LW poem is hand-written, in black ink, Zen-like calligraphy—at the top of which a simply lovely oval-ish circle, looking also like a deft Franz Kline drawing.

nobody's ever really seen.

It's voided (ha) shudder / quiver / shiver

Step out onto another planet far side of

despair, don't hang there for long⁵

⁵Sartre: "Life begins on the other side of despair"—where existential freedom & Zen awakening too briefly meet & hang out.