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How Pinch Kisses Ruined Me For Romance

Experiencing *pizzichilli* young—
All Neapolitan adults intent
On giving children sharp affection: kissed
With possibility of pain required—
I learned to squirm, becoming fruit, firm, ripe,
And ready to be pinched on shameless buds
Called cheeks. Italians like operatic
Intensity: emotions leaving marks,
Or kisses raining fierce as cockpit bombs,
Assaults kids try escaping yet endure—
Young hearts confused from then, torn, victimized.
When do I live for opportunities
Like this? When do I duck? Always unsure,
Tattooed by *pizzichilli*, mind and soul
Re-enter fate's familiar feast of pain,
Know compromised enjoyment *must* be love.

*Italian word: pizzichilli are ‘little pinch kisses’.*
Merletto [Lace]

It’s noon, a time without the shadows here,
Earth fitting trees to her embrace secure
That she has left no trace, no certainty
Of patterns, leaving our lives in pieces
Near 12 o’clock, day’s delicate balance
Suspended, shadowless, conditional.
Reality’s removed without patterns
Like shadowplay. A lesson’s here perhaps,
I thought when I was 4 and lacemaking
Took place, full centered in my childhood’s loom.
Grandmother, lacemaker, her face worn thin
From secrets, some perpetual, straight-pinned.
Our lady of the leaping fingers, she.
Sly Rumpelstilskin in the fairytale
Never knew slackness of time jerked so tight.

A lesson’s here perhaps, I thought at 4,
Unschooled, unlike my nonna: convent-bred,
Whose hands don’t falter though her world gave way
Beneath her tiny feet. She hates it here.
New Yorkers mock outsiders with accents,
And foreign ways. Life snipped all promises
Away along with pretty certainties.

I stand before her, silent, at a loss.
She is my book who sadly lost its place,
Recording everything in foreign words
I’ve yet to learn. Her Naples dialect
Is Virgil’s tongue (that her father prized)
Debased—uneasy compromise she made.
“Fit in!” advised her husband. Neither did,
Unnoticed by America’s embrace.

I study her. Those movements are trimmed tight
Creating bobbin-lace, diminished light
About to stop her for today, unrest
Instructing nonna’s face, defacing joy
As she works threads by feel, through memory.
Grandmother, lacemaker: age silvered her
Beyond full-figured hopes except for mine.
I want to live on fingertips enclosed
In palms that hoard European know-how.
She shakes from pale silk its unwillingness
To be superior: pure handmade lace.
Imagine what perfection she could coax
From hiding out of me? I know we’ll be
Cut off—slim shreds of golden day returned
To earth as shadows alter light she needs.

This slender spray of lace she’ll leave behind,
Ethereal and printed from no plans
But beauty’s memories across pearled seas,
White-capped like virgin brides, their futures laced
With every pretty certainty, those lives
Not ripped asunder. Pinned in place, their lace
(Re-worked for christening gowns), announces news:
Renewal, newborn things, dull safety’s brace.

What lesson’s here of what I want to be?
Chi son’? Chi son’? My insufficient face
Reveals no trace. Ancestral graces may
Escape my generation. The sun leans
To catch late afternoon. Our living room
Is less familiar when I fold pure lace,
Protecting it from dirt, aware my hands
Discourage courage. No safe certainty
Came looking for me at age four except
Low beams of dusk advancing as if dragged
Across a scorned sphere. Twilight blinks. Tired night.
No heart can be heard in winds blowing by.
Like predator or prey, birds nestle in
Among pitch-dripping, tightly laced branches.
Sunset is an illusion, I am told.
Though the sun seems to sink, it’s earth that turns,
Indifferently, away toward east, a habit.

Italian words: merletto is lace; nonna is grandma; Chi son? means who am I?
Domus Pro Carcere

My kite is cornered. We want to get out
Where treetops wave. But Grandpa doesn’t want
To fly or talk today. I can’t ask why.

“Children are seen, not heard,” my mother says,
“So shush!” She starts again in dialect fast,
The funny foreign language mother knows
That I don’t understand. Gran’ won’t explain
Because he says Romano’s, right, bene—
Correct Italian principesse speak
In fairytales he tells when I’m in bed,
That I first heard in English. I’m not sure
If they’re the same girls who are rescued, freed,
Saved in Italian, like Rapunzella,
Shut up, her rope of blonde left long,
More than a kite’s tail. I begged father not
To let them cut my hair. “I can’t elope,”
I had explained. “How would my prince get in?”
He laughed at this and made me feel ashamed.

What’s happening today? Three blackbirds screeched:
Unlucky sign. I rub my hunchback charm,
Then Grandpa’s crucifix. He doesn’t mind,
Stares off at something I can’t see. Who’s this?
A stranger with a suit and small black bag
Makes Grandma cry. But no one’s chasing me,
So maybe it’s okay. Our treetops wave.
“Be’! Andiamo, nonno!” I exclaim,
Moving my kite towards him not gripping back.
I wind myself back in, like pulling down
A winded kite. I’ve lost my ball of string,
I’ve somehow lost my way. My hair’s too short,
Too dark for fairytales. Is this my fault?
Thoughts beat me back like evil birds of prey.
Odd heartbeats flush my ears, drown all my words.

Latin words: Domus pro carcere is ‘home as prison’. Italian words: principesse are ‘princesses’; nonno is ‘grandpa’; be’ is ‘hey’; andiamo is ‘let’s go’.
Aboard S.S. Guiseppe Verdi

They sailed, on the Guiseppe Verdi, here, 
This unfamiliar country, New York’s port, 
Unlike the Old World. Many died who caught 
Diseases en route, illnesses both feared 
And difficult to translate, which increased 
Their apprehension. Grandma said she thought 
Of Viking biers and coffins gently brought 
To rest, those lucky morti who had ceased 
Discussing coming to America.

Like death’s jewels, feathers fell from pelicans.

Italian word: morti are ‘the dead’.
Growing Fig Trees in Gravesend, Brooklyn

Italians love their fruited trees—those figs.
Umberto, nonno mio, introduced
A gathering young family of this stock
To Brooklyn, pruned, clipped, prayed, devoted days,
Still pinned to memories of older ways,
Refusing to let inconsistency
Impose its stay. Allegiance to black fruit
I learned while earning a privilege to pick
Those soft and sticky fichi, synonym
For much not said in front of children then.

Still green, this fig, my oval office when
One's cultivation mattered—so we'd stretch chance,
Obsessed with spreading coffee grounds around,
Massaging the parameters. But still
Bold leaves perpetuated out of spite
Perhaps because life’s spelled all wrong, New York
Much harder than in Naples (winter-poor)—
Though rich potentially for those who add
Refuse from kitchens, thick rinds, sour grinds
To foreign roots. It seems some trees are big
Misunderstandings in America,
Its cool completeness not in need of things
Italian. Nonno mio struggles, pits
His fading strength against Gravesend’s deep weeds,
All dirt familiar. His pipe’s a spoon to stir
Blue air, attached to him, one pleasure’s home.

This Neapolitan tic: nature holds,
Poured into quarrels too small to contain it.
He prunes. He tries encouraging ripe figs
To form as if he knows, when he's detached
From this, freed trees will do just what they want.

Italian words: nonno mio is ‘my grandpa’, fichi are ‘figs’.
His Funeral Without Me

And they assemble, these old men this day,  
Prepared for preservation of respect.  
Economy of passion scaled correct  
For male Americans will be outweighed  
By sons of Italy who’ve come to lay  
Il nonno mio to eternal rest.  
July air tense with recollections checks  
The speed of prayer in Latin’s cushioned sway.

Too young for gravesites, I imagine this,  
His shadow far too heavy for their praise  
To tow where I won’t follow. Wind whips up  
My want. He can’t be gone! Sleep is dismissed,  
Distracted. Night turns dangerous, grief glazed,  
Fears filed beyond where living souls can touch.

*Italian words: il nonno mio is ‘my grandpa’.*
A Little Choir Girl At Passiontide

Repent in Lent is what you do, transfixed
On misery, if you’re good. I’m bad,
Kick-starting my imagination where
Angelic notes reside pitched higher than
My throat, where a humble alto’s swept along
With a choir’s gold harmonics, heaven sent
Sounds a family might make if charmed, music
Offering them another heart to eat.

In Brooklyn, spring pushed up loud daffodils.
Crab apples petaled roads as if to show
New marked (or safer) paths. Immaculate
Puffs grazing in the sky became lambs like
Agnus Dei, the sopranos poised for sins—
Peccata mundi—going up against
Determined steel: the organ pipes’ lament.

Across the busy avenue, my schoolmate
Agnes is bouncing a ball to litanies
Rhymed, right leg up and under, her dress gay
As Easter eggs although it’s Passiontide,
Devoted Tuesdays to the Sorrowful
Five Mysteries. I’m tempted—but no one’s
Around to cross me. I’m returning late
From choir practice, rushing my errands
For mother, emptied from soap operas,
Competing with the Stations of the Cross.

That ball’s pink, bouncy as my friend, all shorn
Now of our solemn school’s drab uniform,
Some gold bit—locket maybe—on her neck,
Hung, swung like a target while she played today,
All unaware of me, my wave, blue eyes
Locked on the ball that’s heading for traffic.
Conchshells, dead white, guard her front door, like ours,  
Though nothing’s the same inside. Agnes!  
*Why couldn’t I be known for forgetting?*

Sorrow tonight: meal’s memory has stemmed  
from “Scourging at the Pillar,”  
Where Jesus, spotless, guiltless, is then beaten  
For others’ sins returns me to my oyster  
Shell, hard home where I dwell with grains of sand,  
Intruders I coat with a glaze to make their  
Existence not so scratchy, making it  
All easier to slip around till I’m good  
And ready for that opening up. From  
My curb, I can see over the hill where  
A slope rose like a hunch, a humpback whale  
Mid-block, fun to sled or bike over if  
You dared, no grassy knoll this trellis-topped  
Train trench, this urban hillside, its blank broken  
Face blocking vehicles, cars gunning for  
You with their solid metal presence in your  
Immediate future, taking action  
That could recast the universe in dark  
Unpredictable ways. An oil truck now  
Is speeding, westbound, toward us, windshield coated  
With weather, Agnes chasing her ball, bent  
Low, smaller, in its path. All open my  
Mouth, three notes rising—“God! Lord! Run!”—wired,  
Unable to hold words in my mind, my  
Prayer brittle as glass. Nothing lived in it,  
No rescue, no child. “Your fault!” I can hear  
My mother say. “What good are you?” I’m bad,  
So useless, and invisible, in shock,  
Observing Agnes, on the ground, mouth open,  
Like mine, as a red cartoon balloon forms, and  

A scream sat in my throat, raw, where I swallow,  
Replaying the black revolution she  
Took under such a fat front tire, ragdoll  

In Easter pastels, virgin-martyr namesake  
Saint Agnes slain at 12, an “older woman,”
Mature compared to us. A wave of people
Near her house closes off my view, adults
Who stood around before, all doing nothing,
Gape now for free and drown my sobs with buzzing,
Excited, empty. Two policemen write
On pads as a tall truck driver stands, head
In hands, like Jesus in “The Agony in
The Garden,” thinking maybe of her or an
Abyss he glimpsed with no sweet remedy
Of light, azaleas swollen with potential
That Agnes never got to see. At home,
I’m speechless, normally, a hostage to
The dinners I eat to get rid of them and,
Since Lent is fast and abstinence, there’s a
Sad bouquet: pink and purple tentacles
On my plate, curving, curled like weapons, as the
Dream daughter I become makes short cuts, clams
Up, pleading “mouth full!,” Latin quiz tomorrow,
And bold strokes I’ll unload on Saturday in
Confession as lies. Agnes is with our
Redeemer. If I were good, truly, I’d
Be comforted but I’m not, questions all
Suspended, too mysterious, tight roped
With sorry knowledge and memories ripe
As rotten cheese, my lost friend weaving through me
Like silk who met her dye. At bedtime, it’s
A different dark waiting, grave, ongoing
Sounds in my mind, truth tied up like a hobo
Sack I could run away with once, my private
Core ripped with wanting, having, not having.

An innocent, dear Agnes, not like those
Kicked early out of Paradise, always poised
For trouble and braced for what’s coming at us.

Latin words: **Agnus Dei** is ‘Lamb of God’; **peccata mundi** means ‘sins of the world’.
The gift of narrative my father had. 
Conflict became adventure in his hands. 
His penitentiary of poverty 
During the Great Depression was reformed 
Through humorous accounts that made us sad 
We weren’t born yet, rationed for after.

In the uneasy partnership of two 
Tongues, English and Italian, he trimmed lines 
To master his material. Threads were 
Slight that tied him to joy but using text 
He wove strong clothing that protected him.

Instructions were unwrapped in the produce 
Department of a store when customers 
Demanded better fruit. He pared away 
The bad parts and in this, too, he learned more 
About great storytelling: minimize, 
Select. Though later narratives would be 
Composed by losses and bad choices, his 
Telling restored weight to its proper place, 
His words at dinnertime kept holding us 
Through sunsets in a fiery embrace.
Visiting Gemini

Sitting we wait for M-G-M Grand Air.
Sunglassed, that one’s my father—but he’s grown
A twin. One man gave me piggyback rides, named
Great stars in heaven, christened strange dustballs
Under my bed, making light of the dark,
Hugger called “dear Dadds,” even when he left,
Went West to write. But shading reptile eyes:
Another guy my Mom’s warned me about,
Who swears by bio-rhythms while angling
Development deals, praises rehab groups.
“Poor women preyed on!” sniffs my aunt—pray with
Perhaps, since his hugs have gotten thinner.

Here, his “Whaddya want?” means for dinner.
What I want is to skip again, a hand
On either side. I’m tired of riots,
Goat cheese on food, not knowing who’s used a bed,
His old apartment’s nicer. Here police
Cruise in “a black and normal” and his friends
Seem so wild. Why is Angel skinny (if
Not “on meth” anymore)? There’s Beth who needs
White mice because she keeps this snake. Dear Dadds
Must think he’s Bogey: all I hear is “kid.”
—What’s her sign?” — “Virgo, aren’t you, kid?” What is
A grown-up doing with a python? It’s
Called Gemini. Who cares if Cher’s across
Our table? Tell me: what is that? I care about
This writer with no paper in his house,
No ribbons, stamps—then empties block his deck!
I wish he’d point at Pegasus’s neck
Without that smell on his breath. DADDs! Suggest
We BOTH walk through that gate! No. His goodbye—
With shades on—is: “Don’t mention Gemini.”
Emphysema

My uncle coughed through every call. I wished
He’d want to live not choke, not smoke, pushed through
To past tense, with his fast life done, run like
Butter through fingers, rich once, then all gone.

Negotiating, I would fight for words.

He’d find forgetfulness in nicotine,
Thick phlegm like time’s raccoon impatiently
Poised, waiting with its sharp claws and greedy jaw.

Already I see red around each gasp.
Thin mucous spits the air like pissed-off ghosts.
Cold comes between us—dread hands closing in.
Cedar Waxwings

My youngest sister’s dying first. That’s not
How it’s supposed to be—thoughts I push hard,
Harder, the small soprano in the swing
Flying to greet the blue with her high C.

She has her mother’s eyes, and begs for more
With promises she will hold on! —a good girl
Who’s never-never-bound. Soon she won’t fit
In this contraption, chubby legs too close
Already to the frame. I’ve just explained:
Some things grow fast like cedars—massing thick
Enough to matter, so strong they repel
Most other forces. High above us now
Cedars shield us from wind, block the cold rooms
Where promise grows, exposing flesh closer
To bones, a chest without hope, a matter
Of time. Trees near this playground stir, newborn
Swift cedar waxwings bring their young treats, greet
A vast horizon, optimistic might,
As I try pushing so much weight away.

A girl on a swing, returns to me, again, again,
Protected, safe, and saved. Hold on, my love. Hold on!
The Baby-Sitting

We stayed up late when I would baby-sit.
The master bedroom knew no sleeping then
As white love ripened into readiness
Because of unabbreviated nocturnes,
Each kiss a tick, mind’s silent blast-off food.

Our pleasure stretched, determined to out-do
A second coming of red-handed dawn.

No one discovered, caught us, nor caught on
Except my calendar, my inner springs.
Whatever leaks, whatever creaks from love
Exacts its toll. Not right then skeptical,
We rolled with love’s stupendous spectacle.
First Thirst

My resident love asks about my first—
All that went on within, unswerving truth
About my spin in love’s synthetic spell
That made me shake virginity lint-free
Forever from my panties. Her heart hurts,
Ineligible for relief, till told.

It’s what remains a secret: that does it.
The undefinable, unnameable
Is bleeding a whole new world. Her mind stays up
Unfolding, seeing if I left some holes.

Why should I teach old memories to talk?
Because two teens were sticky? Or because
She has stuck blame to it? My genesis,
My turn in love’s old soft machine, swept me
Along like a river bound for other beds,
Sinking those who insist on wringing out
Interpretations from originals—
Two youngsters who no longer would exist.
Parting Shot

How I wish you were here alone instead
Of with me, poised, on this Italian train,
Your fingers fishing for a splashy lure,
Eyes broadcasting to women far and wide,
Undressed lips test-driving warm, speechless lies.

Your hands led me to love’s soft alcoves, dear,
As your expression—occupied—checked out,
Consuming many images ahead
Of what developed. Damage lines my life.
My souvenir can’t be an exit wound.

Now you’re on film, the property of my
New camera, mismatched—mouth still at work
With wanting more, eyes fading while you wave,
Those gestures meeting the indifferent air.
Vespertilio [Bat]

In Mexico, we honeymooned, my first
Time viewing the Pacific. Sunset dressed
A disenchanted evening as we dared
To peer across where barrenness can’t be
As bearable as when, relieved by rocks,
Distinctive curving greens, one sure thing there
Reminds us our world hasn’t been erased.

The moon stayed in. There’s nothing light tonight.

Stiff bristled fear dug tracks in my scalp till
We plug extension cords in lamps, parade
Out on an Acapulco balcony
Like bridesmaids, hoping for some bats, their red
Machinery of appetite alive
This hour, ready to devour my edge
Of desolation. Batwings flap, a sound
Like crisp applause, but, spotting lights below,
Some hide a tiny face in their arms like
Shy children. It’s so black, infernal all
Around, when this nocturnal choir rides.

Through wind, they speak to me, the antidote
To barrenness, forever pushing on
Despite the vast uncaring, steadying,
As if wings were things that released my day.

Latin word: *vespertilio* is ‘bat’.
Expecting Babbo Natale in Cortina

I can’t find warmth. It’s not our altitude,  
The Alps’ substantial snow that fashions shapes,  
New powder coating life, replenished nights—  
When bodies are restored, small tissues knit.

Our private proofs of love, sought after dark,  
Materialized, bubbled on bedsprings,  
Where we discovered sources: love’s issue,  
Like riches stored in secret places—we  
Becoming multiplied. And we sang praise  
To blood that won’t remain alone, praised love  
That fashioned newborn shapes—maternity,  
Till one excluding cry—then silent nights.

I can’t get warm since watching that Snow-Cat.

I skied its tracks spooled ’round some evergreens,  
And thought of children playing Christmas Day  
Around our tree, discarded tissue balled  
Near opened presents, newborn joy in place.

That manscape tows me back to bed. You get  
Me in a head-lock, then a white tangle.

Outside, there’s carolling, their voices raised  
To praise one deer. The sauna whistles steam,  
As we’re replenished red, in sweat, in leaves.

*Italian words: Babbo Natale* is ‘Father Christmas’.
Mattinata

That dark cathedral we’ve passed—second time,
I'm sure—is proof we’re lost, this dog-eared map
Another mystery on my damp hands,
And yesterday’s last accident red, tight
Across my mind, the Autostrada lined
With better cars than our Fiesta loan
From Hertz-Italiana, drivers making
Mouthfuls of grand imperfect music there,
In our direction, hating tourists dim
As rusted roofs, our lack turned up—exposed.
If weariness won’t finish us, rust must.

Halfway to wishing I were home, dead—or both! —
There’s Tintoretto’s sky. The ceilings
Of the Autostrada come from paintings viewed
In muted colors as compared to this
Display: dim business of a dawn lit now
Like Lazarus just risen, frictionless.

Italian words: **mattinata** is ‘morning’; **Fiesta** is a type of car; **autostrada** is ‘a divided highway’.
Secret Midtown Garden

Our first apartment bordered ugly Hell’s
Kitchen, a place for hanging your head out
The window, yelling for "police, police!"

The back door was my savior, leading me
To jade insertions of a picket fence
That hid a missing piece of Paradise,
Green growing something quite unlike itself.

Here: rose aroma heavy in blue air,
Pink heliotrope lovely as a laugh,
Mature hydrangeas, honey in their cheeks,
Green eyefuls powering up two lives when
The wormy world of midtown leaves the mind
Without its moorings. Secret is our yard,
And lion-lit for us alone, as bold
As some unanswered prayers—survivor’s way.
When he complains—“Always outdoors!” he’ll say,
“Bent, knees-down!”—I plead debts I owe the day.
Mother On Morphine

A madman crushed her favorite makeup
To paint my mother’s floor. Imagine rouge
On top of powders, scattered door to door.
“‘I’ll clean this up!’ I say till she’s relieved,
Obedient enough to swallow her
Tart, medicated, Lotos-like ice cream.
She’s less combative, calmed by her morphine.
The mind’s embrasures, freed from pain’s embrace,
Will search for entertainment and escape
Confinement, longing to erase what’s real.

Mom’s traveling through Tinseltown and Rome
Of sixty years ago, a fond time when
Magnani commandeered “The Rose Tattoo.”
Perhaps to mother films were fancy cures.
An audience suspected everything,
Eventually, would turn out just fine.
My mopping scrolls sweet fictions she can screen
Through fantasy, delaying hideous
Mortality, the final credits roll,
When shovels dance and dust returns to dust.
Since Roxynol has brought its soft hammer
To bear on mother’s habit of rebuke,
We’re playing she’s an actress, which helps script
Our mock reality. We call this place
“A dressing room,” her home “a trailer” parked
Aside the set. She’s idle now because
It’s needed—her director will demand
That shot where she looks rested. It’s agreed
She’ll close her eyes while I beat grief from rugs.
Making a comeback, newly patient, she
Rehearses. It’s an unfamiliar role,
With gentle words expressed with self-control,
Extending herself to unseen marquees.
Detecting flickers of excitement keyed
By movie light, I hope there’s room for me.
Anima Agonistes [Soul on Trial]

Part 1. During Lent

Resuscitate the wilted, raise what’s close
To death: on their lanai I’m still green
At miracles, surrounded by a sky
Gone cold, thin tendrils, others that curled up
In self-protection, living through dying:
My mother’s crown-of-thorns, old hens and chicks,
Impatiens, rosary vines, all consigned.

I’m trusted to recover favorites
Forgotten in ruined grass blades wisped away
With those resigned to layered loss by knives—
With dignity. In its own bed, blood-red,
An amaryllis, prized, waits, hibernates.

My mother’s eager to succumb to bloom.
She’s overdue for majesty, that awe.
_o, mater nostra, fiat voluntas tua._

Part 2. Flashback: A Past Christmas Season Near Tampa Bay

It’s Safety Harbor’s Gulf of Mexico
Producing Christmastime’s Cancerian
Heat in December that confused this bulb.
Amidst the presents and nativity,
Its empty cradle strewn with straw, green life
Ripped up gay mummy wrapping, and tore loose,
Unhampered by its ground like Lazarus
Unbound. My parents, unprepared for ghosts
Of miracles, became unnerved by sounds
Newborn right by their crèche, the fir tree’s base,
Invisible and inexplicable
Like faith. Or like remission. After Mass,
They find a determined amaryllis, force
That sleeps but cannot die, that mother took to heart.
Part 3. During Advent

The screened lanai cured by potent sun
Makes specimens thrive but this takes its time—
Determined amaryllis—teasing us,
As if it knows that mother needs no plant
That grows on mortal soil. Examined, though,
Our last time, blood has rushed, its bud has blushed
A crimson that can only mean one thing.

I rush to mother, “Vivat!” in my heart.
The priest has come for her confession, led
With rosary-wrapped raised hands. “In vitam
Aeternum,” my lips chant along with theirs,
Head bowed out of respect, my eyes still holding on.
Bio In The Sky

Skywriting life in images, improved
By flourishes, my style is prettified,
That twist on each descendent well-controlled.
(—No one's approaching, Memory. Exhale!—)

Skywriting’s all dream-dusted, iced on blue—
Like ghosts no horse will bear. Valves regulate
This airshow billboarding my parents, not
Exposed before like gods. Allowances
Come first. Spray-point my Mom. Come hitch her up
To model height: a famous diva tufted
Ring-tossing love our way, streamed harmony
We might expect to hear near rainbowed curls.

My father’s plume-smoked features lit with love
Almost appear as I back up to what
I missed: affection gaining on itself,
Creating the illusion someone’s pleased
Possessing me. These masks refuse to hold,
Become safe haze, while shrinking, curved towards earth,
Whose gravity foils some ideas. This realm
Has high rewards yet nothing’s closely held.

My smoke-jets off, I fly past our old house,
Gaze through lowered sights. Who loves there now?
Steam wept on panes as darkness skinned green boughs.
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“Growing Fig Trees in Gravesend, Brooklyn” appeared in On the Page Magazine, Spring 2002 [as “A Fig Tree Grows in Brooklyn”]

“His Funeral Without Me” appeared in Italian Americana, Winter 1997 [as “E si riuniscono questi vecchi”]

“A Little Choir Girl at Passiontide” appeared in tnr, Spring 1998; winner of 3rd tnr Poetry Award [as “Agnus Dei”]

“Visiting Gemini” appeared in WildSound Poetry Festival, July 2015; winner

“Cedar Waxwings” appeared in Measure, Volume X, issue 2, 2015

“Parting Shot” appeared in Betrayal: A Collection of Poetry and Prose, June 2, 2017

“Vespertilio [Bat]” appeared in Italian Americana, Winter 1996

“Mattinata” appeared in Mused, Bella Online Literary Review, Fall Solstice issue, 2016

“Secret Midtown Garden” appeared in Mused, Bella Online Literary Review, Spring Solstice issue, 2016

“Anima Agonistes [Soul on Trial]” appeared in Windhover, Spring 2016
About the Author

Native New Yorker, LindaAnn LoSchiavo, is a journalist, dramatist, writer, and formalist. Her works for the stage have been produced from coast to coast as well as abroad. One of her short stories is forthcoming in an anthology, *Best American Writing* (2018).