



The Annotated Snake

The fundamental snake
is an arm without a body
the ornament of bloodless embrace

more exquisite
than the hilt of a Persian dagger
husk of Indian corn -
the cold rustle of unsheathed danger
Kali's necklace with its rattle of sk

The mortal snake
is the essence of entanglement:

a turned out intestine -
glut of ancient fear
the fragile neck of a swan
in the savage garden
a severed umbilicus
lost to both worlds

A slumbering snake
is the shadow of a lifeless branch
invisible seam of the quilted desert
arc of the moon, sculpture in glass
a river run dry, a vein of blown glass
an unspun mandala, a circle uncast

The prophetic snake
is the tongue of the fallen god
incanting Ouroboros
Uraeus, caduceus, Kundala
A sinuous Z
fluid as fire, final as the dust -
the tail of a comet that ran out of time

The modern snake is a condom
the future tied up in its domed head -
All those little lives that won't be born
because there is no antidote
in the dark human blood
against the sting of its own kind

IN PRAISE OF FOLLY

It begins with mother singing
In praise of older women
her fingers looped around the belt
of your boyfriend's jeans

needle stuck on *Knights In White Satin* -
music for wistful virgins

a summer engorged with fruit
blistering sap, air
sizzling with cicadas

empty bottles of *Mateus* -
each orb a Paleolithic Venus
her fluted mouth
a hollow for flowers or candles
you worship
in the dark cave of your body.

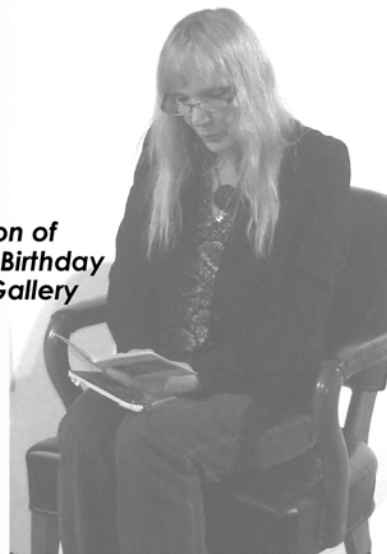
What you crave is
an infusion of the wild
arbours laden with roses
love in lethal doses.

It rises on the hackles of night.
Jeep roaring down hwy 67
hits rock bottom. Gravel spews from tires
kicks the undercarriage of *King Crimson's* lament.

He takes you on bee-stung clover
mother and the sky bearing down on you.
His lips close your eyes to useless constellations.

Let glass shatter on stone -
this blood oblation older than wine.
You're given up
to pure folly, fecund earth
the pock-marked histories of the moon.

Lea HARPER
at 2011 celebration of
Sigmund FREUD's Birthday
in Chancery Art Gallery



TRUE COLOURS

I always dream of fish
when I conceive
Great, golden fish
shaped like Grecian urns

The night before labour
I fly low over freshly tilled fields
dressed in mother of pearl
and abalone

When drawn to a man
I dream wild horses
venture into far fields
for the touch of a tossed mane
Oh the way their flesh ripples down to the flank
that dark, delicious smell of them
how they never take their eyes off you

Sometimes birds appear -
those brilliant, fleeting messengers...
The day an *Indigo Bunting* visited my feeder
then vanished like a flash of neon blue light -
a bird rarely seen north of Virginia -
the long distance call came
to say you had survived
against all odds

These are the true colours
of grace and gratitude

"In Praise of Folly"
from "Unclaimed Baggage"
Littlefishcartpress, 2005;
Placed 3rd in the
Surrey International Writing
Conference Poetry contest,
2004, British Columbia

"Snake"
from "All That Saves Us"
Black Moss Press, 1998

"True Colours"
from "Shadow Crossing"
Black Moss Press, 2000