

EMILY WITTMAN

Two Poems

Night in Christiania

Night in the gelled streets of Christiania
(somehow I know the name).
Night in the gelled streets of Christiania,
too cold for crimes or alley lust.
Too cold for human life, and yet—
wedding toppers are jammed
in a mountain face. Pearly, knobby
troglodytes in duo: white suits, white
gowns and even sheets of snow globe snow,
Porcelain men like monuments,
their women like lace. The mountain
carved with careful panels:
horses and knights, swords and banners—
the history of a proud people.
The stones are whistling blizzard songs
of beasts and men, destinies forged at creation.
I am aloft in the globe, above and beneath,
bleating muffled, awestruck praise:
My Christiania. Then some steamy,
windowless place. Upright in an oxidized tub,
shallow, rusty water at my feet.
Men here too, naked, their hands in chains.
One is with me in the tub,
scaly and brown, the corners
of his mouth lacerated and caked with dirt.
He's hanging from the curtain railing
like a fish, a hook through his tongue.

Bonjour Bonheur

Hello, I would like to make an appointment.
For what? As soon as possible.
Well, what is your name? Ms. Nancy Tuken.
I'll be there. Where? There.

Last time I was there I agreed with the philosopher
on most points. "We" is a threadbare pronoun.
And though a *rendez-vous* at the cinema
is not social, it is the only time our eyes
watch the same spectacle for over a minute.
Godard's "Contempt"—1hr 32 minutes
Hitchcock's "The Man Who Wasn't There"—two hours (at least).
Ms. Nancy Tuken's "*Bonjour Nancy Tuken!*"—unfinished. Time negotiable.

The film opens with an apparent crank call,
a surrealist rip-off, a crack-pot plot
fifteen or sixteen seconds of confusion.
But watch her bid for divine relief!