

## Angel Clare

In these days of middle age,  
her sense of the progressive  
is gone,  
replaced by a centre-of-the-road  
accessibility,  
she who *raised the bar*  
*of innovation*,  
the poster-poet of the  
avant-garde,  
the neoteric,

now disavowed  
by the beret &  
cappuccino crowd.

Everything she loves is *sanitized*,  
so nuclear-family-friendly,  
yet there's none to deny  
the beauty she's embraced:

the cobblestone prints  
of Thomas Kinkade  
supplanting her Warhol  
walls;

motherly  
Maya Angelou  
at the beginning  
of bookshelves, cleaned—  
Ginsberg's *Howl*  
weeded out;

Garfunkel's  
*Angel Clare*,  
from '73,  
heard from speakers  
Sonny Rollins  
had governed;

*All I Know*  
escorting the jotting  
of birdie-in-the-branches  
verse,

as within-the-bounds  
and radio-cordial  
as the split with Simon allowed,

crooning an after-the-silence  
sound so pure,  
so snowfall-  
on-the-summit,

so gentle  
a stream after melt—

she may never leave the trees  
to write of rape  
and blood again.

## Rumours

These juicy *pineapple*  
*tidbits*  
are up to speed  
with the latest gossip

or so I quip,  
as we divvy  
them up  
in bowls,  
one for you

and one for my  
idiot self—  
remarking  
I've heard the  
*pears* are splitting up,  
that one was caught  
in a morning  
tryst with a fig;

while cerise  
did *ooh-la-la*  
with some Auckland  
kiwi rogue.

And the coconut  
from Manila?

It ran *off*  
with the melon's  
daughter, mixing  
its *milk*

with the seeds  
we always  
spit *out*,  
like the *crétin*  
from the streets  
of Bordeaux,  
who taught the  
*bona fide* way  
to *cracher*,

and that *pineapple*  
in French  
is *ananas*,  
confused  
with a tropical  
lech,

the one that's  
sheathed  
in yellow, boasting  
of the length of  
his sweet  
everything.

## **Achilles**

The name our  
friend has chosen  
for her mastiff  
is sublime.

We wait to hear  
the inevitable:  
*Achilles, heel!*

Almost *invulnerable*,  
were it not  
for a patch near his  
paw;

able to sniff  
out a cad,  
*any* boorish  
lout  
who makes a pass.

We envision  
a vivid  
scenario,

picture him  
by her side,

at the *Apollo's*  
*Pharmacy*,  
a box of Trojan  
love balloons  
snuck discreetly  
in her purse,  
the one she got  
on Etsy,  
made with  
*vintage*  
'80s horse hair,  
as if some  
stealthy *turnabout*,

hoping a heroic,  
Grecian Spartan  
will ascend  
from *The Illiad*,

the copy she keeps  
by the fire,  
beside a dog-  
eared *Ancient Myths*,

with two  
glasses of  
*Muscat Blanc*,

one for *her*,

and one for a  
woman's best friend,  
beside her with  
his vicious mouth  
agape, a cave of tongue  
and teeth,

ready to *bite*  
on his arrival,  
sit back *down*  
if she commands;

lick the spot  
below his calf  
as if to pity his  
single weakness.



## Silenzio

The g in Paglioni  
is apparently  
silent,

with the i  
the sound of e  
(robbing it of  
a kingly lion's  
mane),

while the e itself  
is long and clearly  
Italian,

though *we'd* have  
guessed it simply  
by the décor,

the bottles of Abruzzo  
on the wall,  
the scent of fettuccini  
in the air—

but this *isn't*  
consequential,  
it's not a *Yelp*  
review,

it's all about  
the g  
and its refusal  
to hold its weight,

its obsession  
with its stealth,  
its channelling  
Marcel Marceau,

or like the cat  
of Cary Grant,  
scaling the many *roofs*  
*To Catch a Thief*,

that it should be  
*rooves* instead of  
roofs, like hooves  
and a single hoof,

that the horse  
has got it right  
despite its *neigh*,

the shyness  
that comes and  
goes,

inside our alphabet's  
seventh letter,  
hooking us *along*  
either way—

soundless as a feather,  
roaring  
like a Roman  
god.

## **The Horologist**

*Does Anybody Really Know  
What Time It Is?*

—Robert Lamm

Twice a day  
and broken clocks:

the right-  
wing politician  
I agreed with

on policy  
76,  
something to do  
with the care of  
feral cats,  
that he seemed so  
human  
for a change,

or the lout  
in his pickup truck,  
with a monstrous,  
patriot flag,

*Don't Tread On Me,*

and I won't,  
that snakes deserve  
better,

they have feelings  
too,

that I so much  
want to believe  
he really cares,

knows that  
they got a raw  
deal, took the  
fucking blame  
for our Fall,

that the Devil too  
was correct, for once  
(maybe twice),

that we'd become  
like our Creator  
and *all*  
His many flaws,

except for the  
single instance  
He actually *did*  
something about it,

the raining down  
of bread—  
of *Manna*—  
that sweetness  
from the sky,

that He must have  
lost the recipe,

His bakery in  
disrepair,  
until this very  
day,

the hour in which  
a hundred million  
children, thinned  
to their very bones,  
beg Him  
for a miracle,

believing it will come  
when the chimes  
convey a song,

maybe the one  
Rod Stewart  
nicely sung,  
back in 1988,

the final year  
my mother was  
cancer-free,  
*Forever Young,*

that I hated  
everything he did  
until that moment,  
his grating,  
gravelly voice,  
his plebeian  
take on life,  
*Da Ya Think  
I'm Sexy?*

that my watch  
had stopped  
cold dead,

that no one  
even knows  
what a horologist  
does

no one even  
cares

these fractured,  
clockless days

with tar  
in our hour-  
glass

our dial  
without a shadow,  
our smoky excuse  
for a sun

*And may you never  
love in vain*