

Excerpts from work in progress

Gerry Shikatani

acsgerry@gmail.com

Gerry Shikatani has produced poetry, visuals, textsound performance, fiction, and film collaborations during nearly five decades. His books include Aqueduct, First Book, Three Gardens of Andalucia, and the recent The Port's Seasonal Rental. He also writes for the media and is an international culinary critic who has written extensively on Spanish gastronomy. Recipient of El Cruz Oficial de la Orden del Merito Civil from The Government of Spain, Gerry Shikatani is based in the province of Ontario and Spain where he is founding director of Lorca's Granada: writers' retreat & colloquia in Granada.
<http://www.gerryshikatani.com>

PRIVACY –

You always seek the external sources, places of comfort and ease – the cafés and bars where writing can post, moves forward like some insect. Others tell how expression most fluently springs forth from a private and tranquil place, language so interior in a home with its stability, familiar objects and the resources of self-intimacy.

Yet how your own voice seems to take shape precisely around the foreignness, the strangeness of objects unfamiliar, yet giving presence. To be in the world, transient in respect of home, the thick clumsy wallet bulking the pocket comfort, where even the loud pop music of busy bars – the language can here emerge. Such solitude

to penetrate the interior self by that capture, sense of newness to other, and the light is common, community.

At first the unfamiliar is mute, like conversations in a foreign tongue. But from the silence the most visceral emotions to ear, bodies are there in the next room, there's coughing, clearing of your own throat because things are just not made-to-measure. You are taken *outta* the body, stretch in the musculature of the quotidian, feels good – to stretch in your bed.

Stories in excerpt

And hear it, as they serve you, take your order. Coffee, the clatter of life, of those who work, coffee, in service, cadence. The want to say, keep saying, “Another one please, another another refill,” and to sit there in taking such nothings as open to you, the giving who they are the plain speech of work of what the self the presence is is open palm, uh, to take. A table, eyes open

The camera sees from this vantage point people around a table, eating, drinking be merry feast, ritual and totem, that each point – a gift can fill you vocabulary to name, these which you aren’t. Glorious.

But then can one just be take greed and again without a return reaching out such hand it is, what begin to tremble, anxious for words, so much, it is the loss, the silent stammer of continuous desire.

A blue blue sky a painting is in you. A white sail, a mountain, the gillnet of sockeye and Red Springs, the rotation a cycle is, happens, happening on the Skeena, is in you. A packing boat, Brian’s, you take to Port Essington, this here, a put-put boat of the past still humming now in the head and she comes to the table “Do you want some more coffee?”

“Thanks,” the clatter of her heels on plankwood, coffee pot in hand, oh sail flapping behind your eyes, she walking away, the last moment of life, gratuities clank in a box or on the table.

Patio de los Lindajara

As then seven years ago, I return to the peace of this patio, its path of sun falling through the tall shading roof of cypresses, smaller orange trees to the borders. As years before new reconstruction advanced, the central fountain dominates with its splash of water from a central spigot, falling to the larger pool about its circumference.

The myrtle are strongly scented in this shade. The silence and tranquility of monument and garden is of the crowds, the people, as I say in the Skeena (River) too, Rupert, the Pacific Northwest.

Silence and peace which is not of isolation, but the gentle cooperation of crowds, charmed by beauty and wonder, greater peace than solitude, the quiet force, satyagraha, of love-force harvests, plenitude.

I see today too, that it is the stone terrain of the Patio de los Leones in example, or the marble tile floors which within the ornate enclosures, are nevertheless, austere, abstract gardens. The presence of water is real yet refers in its force to the spring, distant sierra source, and is thus entrained too, to the movement of sea, of current in the stones of Daisen-in, the Kyoto garden.

If the garden is silent, and abstract, the ornate walls, as text are abstract in such material, design and shape, the primacy of language, the primacy of visual design. Against, or with this, we might introduce the chanting of sutra, of assuming a seated position, the body forming itself in the space, the garden, the temple, fed by the spring, elemental then, cruceform.

RYOAN-JI, June 10

12.
A text to cross-hatch
a line, the test
of strength of paucity
empty
basket

*

navy-suited & white-sock perfect
these students follow the faith
to this paradise sea we kneel to
ashes left under

mushroom cloud

15.
eyed just above the frame
the reference. Just
out of view, wedding shower
an umbrella soaked
family album
of tear-stained years.

DAITOKU-JI

* Zen temple and its subtemple Daisen-in Kyoto

25. 25 25

26. (for shaunt basmajian)

a) , ,
/

b) ,

33.

barely tipped but

34.

barely tipped but

camelia

barely tipped but

azalea.

35.

barely but

/

,

36.

no reminder:

shoe's gravel.

inside eye.

108.

nothing to hold onto

but stones of a border,

nothing but opening a book of poems,

reading,

nothing to hold onto

by this water.