

by HOLLY DELANEY-WADE

*For me, the linking of poetry with/as criticism offers a unique way to express myself in a venue with great acoustics where troubling topics seem less threatening and easier to manage. I feel freer in my associations and appraisals and appreciate the efforts of others who are committed to the concept of such freedom of expression. With an awareness of certain rules, I am interested in their some times modification and at other times their ignorance as a way to evaluate the things that are important to me and hopefully others.*

2006

Assignments

given as a

by the way

No lines

to guide the task

just an idea

to take

something that matters

Make it into something

you know

to share.

So what do you think? Can you do that?

(What *does* he mean?)

With a vague understanding, I begin the journey as a poet critic.

Modern drama is real life

is art.

Let go.

1984

Not Orwell

It's the year

when everything changed.

The change wasn't much of a change at first but more

like a situation to be dealt with.

A neurological event. Status epilepticus.

Lots of questions and lots of tests.

"Does your brother have a history of drug use?"

"No."

I mean I don't know.

More ginkgo.

(Less wine.)

You become aware of the things you don't know

and wonder why you don't.

"Secret Agent man..."

they've given you a number and taken away your name."

2006

Twenty two years since I didn't know.

I know there are things worse than dying.

My brother subsists:

Mistrusting and fearful

Confused and agitated

Obsessive and delusional

Not quite sure of what is going on

In or out of his mind.

(Did you know they give dogs the same medication for seizures as people?)

Compliance matters.

Who gets the vote?

Paul said George Washington was not our first President but he didn't know who was.

Structure matters.

Deoxyriboneucleic acid trips

You can't just carry on

an alarm and thorazine and four point restraints.

Compliance violence

The high priestess of chemical intervention  
proclaims a drug holiday  
but the salesman works on commission  
and he needs to get back to the business of  
seizing neurons from those who are being forced into foreclosure.

Are you for God or against God?  
Do you love me more than Woody Allen?

Foucault says the institution only serves the keepers  
That the meek will never inherit the earth  
While Derrida counters with fruit punch gentleness that  
Seems to suggest the rulers are only in our minds  
And that following nothing is better than following anything  
As if nothing was anything anyway.

Pee Wee looks to Chairy for comfort.  
Is there a danger to himself or others?  
Maybe one more cigarette will take the edge  
    off the sharp  
        ending and make it dull  
            and boring and then  
                no one will be interested  
                    anymore in what there is to say.

How does it help to shape something into what it never was or should be?  
Where is the line and why is it there?  
Whose line is it anyway?

Whose mind is right and where are we left.

*(Many thought Mohammed and Buddha were crazy too.)*

I wonder what you want. I find myself not caring what you want.

Then I think, maybe, that is what you meant after all.

Sign on your own dotted line to prove who you are to you

never ask for a bill of lading while

Janis said not to compromise

waiting for a train

with

two thumbs up

to the form in principle

but in the end

it might not matter anyway.

Sons of God

Wearing a wig and strumming a guitar.

Five or six or seven

Drinking birch beer from the tap.

Did you burn your feet on the coals from the grill?

Whatever happened to Superman?

Eleven, twelve, or thirteen more years and

The Clash rocked the casbah and you rolled another joint

Eighteen

Trading scrambled eggs and jelly for scrambled brains and paranoia.

Express bus stops here

(and access-a-ride takes over).

Drugged subjection  
with a veiled interest  
in the truth  
of the matter  
because the truth  
is hard to take  
without a spoonful of sugar  
or  
a cigarette break in the day room.

On the hour.

Pee Wee's playhouse  
on Saturday mornings  
makes the weekends worthwhile  
treat meant good  
but appropriate  
seems to be enough.

Insanity is a defensive position of the offended.  
No one in their right mind would do such a thing.

Jane and Michael knew the carpetbag was only the beginning of seeing and  
being in a way that does not pretend  
to be what it is not  
or what it is that offers a new way to look at something because the old way  
just doesn't work anymore.