

RITUALS



SUMMER 2024

Soho at 4 a.m.

by Diana Raab

Ripped out of bed this morning
by a wake-up call, and buzzing alarm
which I smashed down with my half-asleep

hand. I rolled over to perform morning rituals,
and before rolling a suitcase into the elevator
I tossed toiletries inside,
then pushed neon buttons to ground floor.

Moments later, its doors slid open
to transport two drunken lovers to their rooms
where they'd consummate some passing attraction,
united over a martini and salt from our earth

At hotel's entrance sits a wooden bowl
of fresh apples, scrumptious-looking,
yet too large to jam into an already
stuffed carry-on on way to airport.

At curbside another sexy couple staggers
from my taxi, feet getting in the way,
they head for our hotel. Before slipping into
the cab's back seat, I move aside to let them out.

After a good morning to our driver,
silence ensues between him and me
that familiar city protective barricade.

This cab reeks of fermenting alcohol and ghosts
of necking lovers tottering between successes
and obsessions. Which bridge to our airport,

driver asks. Why are you asking me? I live in Kentucky.
The fastest way, I guess. That's not necessarily
the shortest, he says, always traffic-dependent.

I ponder his 4 a.m. insights while my morning eyes
swivel across streets laden with silent homeless
lying sprawled along its sidewalk.

I want to go home where people sleep in their beds.

Bubbly Truths

by Diana Raab

It all begins with this ritualistic undressing: foil and wired cage.
How it reminds me
of the brassiere holding my breasts in place. And then, its pop:
that sudden pressure release—
effervescent euphoria, with foamy overflow: my champagne.

My eyes follow those bubbles, which rush — desperate lovers — to its top.
This golden drink leads my mind into deeper catacombs of ecstasy,
whether behind a keyboard of creation, or within a journal to reveal my
words
or in a bedroom which releases me, the woman.

And when empty, it too will be dunked: head first into that ice bucket
beside a table for two,
but, only when its job is done. I love this sweet flute which holds my truth
serum, sweet flute,
truth serum, muse, pour me another, love, pour me another.