

Entr'acte

*Pray, do not mock me. I am
a very foolish fond old man
and fear I am not in my perfect mind
- King Lear*

1

Two people crazy about each other
she tells him, always on one another's mind;
and later, that the uncanny empathy they shared
wasn't just a dream and might even have made
unconditional love, with certain conditions,
more than just a pretty notion to flirt with.

But when, that last time they hold each other close,
the easy intimacy no longer there,
she says *What you want any girl can give* —
turning the precious and personal into something
ordinary that might well go for a song —
the whole production goes half-hearted.

2

Those who study these things say that men
in a break-up tend to jump into the void
while women will have someone waiting in the wings
so it's no surprise when she finally moves out
after years of co-dependent abuse
she has a back-up ready to play the part.

The surprise is that she keeps it secret from him
like a daughter in shame and pride keeping
her lost virginity from her father as if
becoming herself is somehow a betrayal — until he
finds out the hard way, seeing them in public,
the stand-in's hands familiar with her.

3

Lunatic, lover and poet all compact
says the king of the fairies in a midsummer's dream;
so then might Dildo the Dotard, tragi-comic
in his own closet drama, parody:
*teacher mentor confessor shaman nuncle
by dint of transference all too complexed.*

Enter Oedipus Rex and Father Time
stage left stage right before the curtain.
Blind the one, eyes gouged out in a fit
of self-loathing, the bloody sockets rinsed with tears.
The other, long-robed, -tongued and -bearded
blood-sacrifice in the whisper of his scythe.