

Lorena Duarte

**WHO CARES ABOUT AMERICAN POETS?**

who cares about American poets?  
about our sufferings of pen and bleedings in ink,  
about our dramatic and clichéd lines (see above),  
about our improvised lives and ever ready to suffer smiles?

we've run out of things to say.  
I think about four or five known wars and  
many dozen secret wars ago  
that last bit of such an oodling pastime as poetry was lost.

now, people want Bible "truth" or  
perhaps are agnostically indifferent  
or are numbed out television dumb  
who knows?

point is, no one here reads poetry  
and I'm not even really crazy about it  
like NO ONE HERE DAMN THEM  
but just like,  
no one here reads poetry.  
only other poem makers care to  
figure out the tortured meaning of one  
seamless phrase or another.

see, I am trying to write a  
sestina, but I keep wondering why.

I suppose if it is an audience I want,  
I should bill myself in my Latina poet way.  
code-switch  
y hablar about my the blood dancing in my veins,  
mi pobre mama,  
and how I don't care una mierda what anyone thinks.

pawn that identity of mine.

or perhaps join some scene —

but see, in the spoken word circles  
it sounds so much better if it  
has rhythm, rhymes,  
makes you laugh  
and screams “momma!”  
and there they want me to tell  
my brown woman story  
the brown woman story  
that brown woman story  
and then <<sing>> just a little,  
especially at the end.

and I don't sing.

then my terribly erudite friends  
want abstractions and  
associative logic and  
white peacocks\* and  
green fuse driving flowers \*\*  
and believe me, so do I —

but how can I pour my  
love and heartsweat over my  
perfect “impromptus.”  
analyze every comma, dash,  
adjective I use —

how? while the world turns to shit  
and my dinner burns to a crisp?

I mean you want abstractions,  
I can give you abstractions:  
fiery webs I loop  
in bitter clumps over  
deaf deaf ears.

but anyway, is it just a big  
masturbatory display?  
acumen of words here on display!

she speaks—in two tongues!  
and can approximate worthwhile

entertainment.

then of course, there are the ones who ask  
what do you want this to do?  
what is the point?  
excellent question.

what also is the point of blade of grass or tree?

point is this—have you ever  
heard a man cry like that?  
have you ever made a man cry like that?  
have you ever seen a flower so pretty,  
had such a shitty day,  
had such a funny thought?

you have? me too.

that's it.

the real question, I think,  
should be something like,  
and so? how does anything change?

I say it doesn't.

because no one here reads American poets.

there are no ears, no forums  
for our want-to-be-blinding words.

and so, I think,  
we run out of things to say.

\* "He loved three things", *Poem Without a Hero and Selected Poems*, Anna Akhmatova.

\*\* "The Force Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower", *Collected Poems*, Dylan Thomas.