

New Poetry from George Kramer: “Three Snapshots of Superman’s Mother,” “Google Earth”



ASTRONOMICAL DISTANCE OF LONGING / *image by Amalie Flynn*
Three Snapshots of Superman’s Mother

Budapest, Hungary. December 1944.

This stagnant end squats over its vile start
Faster than a speeding bullet!

from the slag pile, the louse waste
More powerful than a locomotive!

the fecal secretions of war
Leaps tall buildings in a single bound!

the girl’s father was sought for
It’s a bird, it’s a plane, its Superman!

the column of Jews being
Truth, justice and the American Way.

marched to the river.
This is a job for Superman.

It was then that God stole her belief
but left her fraught wonder.

Fort Collins, Colorado. November 1963.

The vertical hold hop-skips,
horses drawing hearses
plod inside the droning box,

fusing to the vitreous reflection
of his mother's tear-streaked face.
Preschool Superman stews.
No president calls Him to Dallas.
He was not consulted
on preempting His TV show for this
dull parade.
His caped powers, though mighty,
are no match for the elegiac bagpipes or
the morose Kennedys on this untuned Magnavox.

Alexandria, Virginia. April 2016.

Floating in my feeble galaxy of lost atoms,
I peer at an old picture frame.
Behind glass the girl's silver halide half smile
issues a cautious greeting across
this astronomical distance of longing.
I orbit that smile's twilight glow –
a planet where love has nowhere to go.

Google Earth

Somewhere Gerardus Mercator
met on an equator
the ragged hunter who first drew
from warm pitch and raw whisk
the rugged path she found
to the grazing grounds.

Their compasses agreed:
on friable parchment
mapmakers must have
their maniacal dragons, their
flawed seas, and their ranges
of rumpling blunders.

An old wall was woken by
a flattened paper globe,

a remnant copy etched
by an ancient calligrapher
with a cliff grip
chiseling a copper plate.

It is easy to see what is lacking here:
a map's crinkle, or its volcanic dimples,
green alpine frock, sweat of ocean.
No chance for glass-headed pins,
and lands not thick nor lean are plially lying
on a polarized screen.

Swipe past the displaced perspective
and its warning of the asphalt assault,
sharp canines snapping
at the ribs of gated jungles,
as the electric sky thunders
down boundless data.

In this benign monitor light I read
about the first arrow and its story
of the bloody hand that held it
and the slaughters that it stopped.
We daily stride newly into changeless air
on the journey to pixel from dot.