

Spring 1975

Three Poems

Mary Anne Miller

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GLASGOW

your sun must have been bought
in the faded, cracked dime store around the corner
where the old men stand in front and smell their fingers
dreaming of wars they had fought
and medals they had won
made out of blood and bullets and moans of dying men
where the wooden indian stands dreaming
of buffalo bones and coyote howls that you shoot in the night
when the blood turns brave.

Your land is as barren as a grave
without mourning or tears or maggots
and the wind blows forever sucking oxygen
out of your breath until you feel like a piece of chalk
that has been in a drawer for 300 years
and you get all dry and pale like the only tree that grows there
and you know they'll chop you down some day
and let you blow away to be beaten into dust.

O Glasgow were your people grown out of this parched ground
or were they born without minds and souls
are they all just sagebrush with hearts made of sand
O Glasgow God is not hateful . . .
were your sins that great?

OLD

When I am old, about 200
and gout has me by the toes
and my eyes are as clear as milk,
don't pick over my plate or feed
me corn with a rubber spoon,
and don't leave me in a sheet-white room
with nothing for company but my bones
and dreams of the mountains,
and rather than tell me how handsome I look
today with my best death face,
take me to the woods and shoot me,
and I won't have to be in Heaven
to be the luckiest man on earth.

“WHERE DIRT STICKS IN YOUR THROAT BUT FITS”

When it rains, farm people work
like dried straw and crippled ants,
land is only extra bones in your back
and cattle tend to have more sense
You could never breathe here
You would fall like flies in black heat
unless you know more secrets of the sun
than I do. . .