

## THREE POEMS

BY RITA ANN HIGGINS

### ASK THE CONCIERGE

The demented walk tricky step here  
jittery footfall, fractious jibe.  
They bicker in the 'everything for a dollar shop'  
later when the energy is spent  
they sit with their own selves  
their underweight psyche.

One begs outside a shop called 'Seduction'  
underwear to raise the Titanic.  
Healthy looking mannequins with brazen breasts  
balefulls of Canadian promise.  
They come hither you  
but you never come hither them.  
Their chilling look deceptive,  
their cherry lips,  
kiss me kiss me,  
but only in your dreams, loser.

Further down the street of the black squirrel,  
a shop owner boasts about the underground.  
You should see our underground  
safest in the world,  
no one ever gets plugged here.  
In a doorway above Hades,  
a policeman tells a man with no legs,  
my name is zero tolerance  
have you a licence for that rig?  
My name is zero tolerance,  
where is your mud guard?

The concierges have the real power here;  
they take one look at your baggage,  
one look at you, haversacks disgust them,  
owners and trainers of haversacks  
disgust them more.

Cross them and you will never see  
one drop of Niagara fall.

They wide step and side eye you,  
in their loose suits, hair oil up their sleeves,  
their feet are made of sponge.  
They deal in looks and eyebrow raising  
The Concierge code,  
uncrackable to the luggage losers.

Back down on the high street  
I ask the man outside 'Seduction'  
if I can take his picture.  
Don't ask me,  
I have no picture to give or take,  
what you see is what you get,  
you see nothing you get less.

What the concierge seeks he finds  
he pirouettes, he plucks, he spins he flies  
where the concierge lives, the beggar dies.

**HE KNOWS NO ARTICHOKES**

She didn't mind his toxic tan  
or his weasel taste in toothpaste.  
What she did mind was  
the way he'd Cheshire cat  
the woman from the council  
and the way vice versa  
would Cheshire cat him.

It was on the tip of her tongue  
to tell vice versa  
that he was poison on the inside  
and not to be fooled by his silk sheet face  
or them hammer your knickers to the ground eyes.

And furthermore when he tells you  
he likes the Jerusalem artichokes  
forget it, the liary yoke knows no artichokes.  
She has a good mind to tell vice versa  
about his guacamole hole  
only she'd probably pity him.  
He had a way of making the females pity him  
a toxic tan way of touching the pity spot.

If they really knew,  
his favourite food was  
dried pigs blood with a thistle on top  
and if he's not having a collision with a fry up  
he's traumatized.

Jerusalem artichokes my crack,  
don't be fooled  
by his silk sheet face, she'd say  
he's rotting from the inside out  
I know it and the street knows it  
the council should know it too.

**THE IMMORTALS**

The boy racers  
quicken on the Spiddal road  
in Barbie Pink souped-ups  
or roulette red Honda Civics.  
With few fault lines or face lifts to rev up about  
only an unwritten come hither of thrills  
with screeching propositions and no full stops –  
if you are willing to ride the ride.

Hop you in filly in my passion wagon.  
Loud music and cigarette butts are shafted into space.  
We'll speed hump it all the way baby  
look at me, look at me  
I'm young, I'm immortal, I'm free.

Gemmas and Emmas  
stick insects or supermodels  
regulars at 'Be a Diva'  
for the perfect nails  
eyebrows to slice bread with  
and landing strips to match.

They wear short lives  
they dream of never-slowng down-pours  
while half syllable after half syllable  
jerks from their peak capped idols lips.  
Their skinny lovers melt into seats  
made for bigger men  
Look at me, look at me  
I'm young, I'm immortal, I'm free.  
The boy racers never grow older or fatter.

On headstones made from Italian marble  
they become 'our loving son Keith'  
'our beloved son Jonathan,' etcetera etcetera.  
On the Spiddal road  
itching to pass out the light  
they become Zeus, Eros, Vulcan, Somnus.