

## Fast Speaking Woman [excerpt]

Anne Waldman, 1945

woman never under your thumb, says  
skull that was a head, says  
bloodshot eyes, says

I'm the Kali woman the killer woman  
women with salt on her tongue

fire that cleans  
fire that catches  
fire burns hotter as I go

woman traded her secrets never, says  
woman reversed the poles, says  
woman never left America to know this  
but she did, says, she did leave

woman combs snakes out of her hair  
woman combs demons out of her hair

woman lies down with the cobra  
then meditates under cobra canopy

woman had a bone in her throat, says  
was it yours? says  
she admits she has a taste for you, says  
she's cannibal woman, Kali woman

## A Step Away from Them

BY FRANK O'HARA

It's my lunch hour, so I go  
for a walk among the hum-colored  
cabs. First, down the sidewalk  
where laborers feed their dirty  
glistening torsos sandwiches  
and Coca-Cola, with yellow helmets  
on. They protect them from falling

bricks, I guess. Then onto the  
avenue where skirts are flipping  
above heels and blow up over  
grates. The sun is hot, but the  
cabs stir up the air. I look  
at bargains in wristwatches. There  
are cats playing in sawdust.

On

to Times Square, where the sign  
blows smoke over my head, and higher  
the waterfall pours lightly. A  
Negro stands in a doorway with a  
toothpick, languorously agitating.  
A blonde chorus girl clicks: he  
smiles and rubs his chin. Everything  
suddenly honks: it is 12:40 of  
a Thursday.

Neon in daylight is a  
great pleasure, as Edwin Denby would  
write, as are light bulbs in daylight.  
I stop for a cheeseburger at JULIET'S  
CORNER. Giulietta Masina, wife of  
Federico Fellini, è bell' attrice.  
And chocolate malted. A lady in  
foxes on such a day puts her poodle  
in a cab.

There are several Puerto  
Ricans on the avenue today, which  
makes it beautiful and warm. First  
Bunny died, then John Latouche,  
then Jackson Pollock. But is the  
earth as full as life was full, of them?  
And one has eaten and one walks,  
past the magazines with nudes  
and the posters for BULLFIGHT and  
the Manhattan Storage Warehouse,  
which they'll soon tear down. I  
used to think they had the Armory  
Show there.

A glass of papaya juice  
and back to work. My heart is in my  
pocket, it is Poems by Pierre Reverdy.

# Divinely Superfluous Beauty

by Robinson Jeffers

The storm-dances of gulls, the barking game  
of seals,  
Over and under the ocean ...  
Divinely superfluous beauty  
Rules the games, presides over destinies,  
makes trees grow  
And hills tower, waves fall.  
The incredible beauty of joy  
Stars with fire the joining of lips, O let our  
loves too  
Be joined, there is not a maiden  
Burns and thirsts for love  
More than my blood for you, by the shore of seals  
while the wings  
Weave like a web in the air  
Divinely superfluous beauty.

## Preaching Midnight

by Eric Loya

I know the harsh kiss of midnight,  
the feel of rough hands on tender skin  
leaving bruises like blooming purple lilac,  
the blinding embrace of jasmine,  
and the ache of distant stars which weigh  
down broad shoulders and stout necks.  
I've reached into a hunter's moon and pulled  
from it blood as black as a murder of crows  
in the chill of a night sky, and watched  
continents of clouds, peopled by sulfur  
and fault lines of air, lured toward  
the sea by the smell of salt.

I want to preach into the early morning  
oranges and purples the sermon of midnight,  
the tabby cat's wandering, the acidic  
smoke of burning wood from a dozen  
fireplaces, to give the day some purpose  
other than illumination,  
and speak in the language of traffic lights  
and street lamps. I want to reveal the layers  
of pale moonlight, thin as onion skin,  
the hissing of families of opossums  
as they scuttle down sidewalks in their grey  
coats, and the resin eyed raccoons watching  
from the shadow of sewer drains.  
I'd lay constellations at your door step.  
I'd leave the delicate feathers of mockingbirds  
and dark solitude of golf courses  
in wicker baskets on well-lit porches.