

Descent... Variations on a Williams Theme

Category: Poems

written by Martin Kohn | September 18, 2015

Martin Kohn

1.

No cold plums
just the leftover
chocolate ganache
that we left in the fridge
and which I falsely accused
you of eating

Forgive me
as I lick
the sweet plate clean
and look for a magnet
to post this note

2.

This time it's the
roasted beets goddammit
black flecked
with a modicum of oil

There's a trace of
char between my
incisor and molar

I'm at
the drugstore
buying floss

3.

Remember the joke
about the 3 old men
one
who could not
remember why
he opened the fridge door

Help me
remember

4.

Voulez-vous coucher avec moi ce soir?
Isn't that the come-on line

I used on our second date?

it was so cold
you were so sweet
the record, unforgiving

skipping in the room
next to us

About the poet:

Martin Kohn is director of the program in medical humanities at the Center for Ethics, Humanities and Spiritual Care, Cleveland Clinic, and associate professor of medicine at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University. He cofounded the Center for Literature and Medicine with Carol Donley of Hiram College, and with her served as a founding editor of the Literature and Medicine book series at Kent State University Press. His poetry has appeared in print and electronic journals including [Pulse](#), [Exquisite Corpse](#), *Ad Libitum/Annals of Internal Medicine* and [ZEEK: A Jewish Journal of Thought and Culture](#).

About the poem:

"Sometimes I meander through old poems and consider what to do with them. That's how this poem took shape many years after I'd written the first part of it, for it seemed to be begging for an extension of its life. The extension took me to familiar places and to those I'd not imagined before. It was a fruitful exercise, hopefully done with aplomb."

(Editor's note: William Carlos Williams was born on September 17, 1883.)

Poetry editors:

Johanna Shapiro and Judy Schaefer