

Knight Errant

Call me Night-Error, evening trawler
with a quest and a question. I have undergone
six ordeals, clad in chainmail and spandex:
scaled tenement walls to find a beehive
between bricks—*Apis mellifera*, tremble-dancing
to distribute nectar—and smoked them out;
made it snow in late August, dusting
the old-granny zinnias; hauled off
the harbor rocks so speedboats had safe passage
(*o my frail craft, yawing in the combers*);
lay down on a mattress teeming
with bedbugs and lice, and plucked
single hairs from my scalp for five hours;
ate the red chiles drying on the neighbor's
wooden garden frame; and pulled my friend
from the brink of perilous, cliff-diving love
(if one can ever pull another from the brink).
I brought these merit badges documenting
the feats to lay at your feet, o demanding one
(*dies irae, dies illa, quantus tremor est futurus*).
I wrote my tale out in cursive and gave an illuminator
fifty bucks to add goldleaf letter-animals
in the margins and sprinkle it with rosewater.
Hearken, lend an ear in this crepuscular hour:
I seek respite. Your hand on the small of my back.
Will you read? Will you bemadam me?