
Two Poems by John Gery

Lie #5: That Babe Ruth Pointed Out That Famous Homer

As usual, who knows where this is going?
I met this guy once, damn good public speaker
at sports banquets without no ladies present,
who told me he believed, without quite knowing—
like the gal who runs off only when you seek her—
that fame assures our being obsolescent

by and by. Who thinks of Nefertiti,
for instance, anymore? Her lusts, I mean,
or appetites. Nothing remains in tact,
and even the most monumental treaty
among God-fearing states ain't worth one bean
if everyone just buys it. Still, we act

expecting our gestures to be acted on,
like children who fight their parents, imitating
the action they resist the way *that* action
resembles those by which amoebae spawn.
I always thought of sex when I was dating,
for instance, which became a great distraction

from having to get laid. The gals were pretty
enough—I had this weakness for a dress
and weighed less then than now, my mind awash
in a fog too dense to burn off from the pity

of women – yet the moment to confess
I was as ready as a butter squash

would pass silently, like an evening breeze,
the kind you only notice in the summer
caressing you: You raise an arm, then pray
what you don't know will lift you through the trees
to God. That guy said you can pick a comer
by how he doesn't know the time of day

as well as what he's thinking he might do
with whatever's left of it. I've since forgotten
what else he said – on what you have to lose
by taking risks. The point is that it's true
until your body's in the ground and rotten
your best bet is a temporary ruse.

On the News of Our Foreign Intervention

The beauty sacrificed to go abroad
is hardly mentioned, while instead
they emphasize what dangers lie ahead –
night blindness, heatstroke, odd limbs sawed

by errant missiles, insects, toxic gas,
dissentery. Yet what's an eye
without its own familiar stretch of sky,
a nose without it fresh mown grass,

a cheek without that touch it's felt so often
it senses when she's insincere
and when she wants him back, inside, an ear
without the song it's carried off in?

And here, how can the rest of us make news
to move the world, when worlds away
the news concerns unmoving heaps of clay
made beautiful by what they lose?