
MARIA MAZZIOTTI GILLAN

Poetry Festival at the Hoboken Museum

On Sunday, my friend takes me to the Hoboken Poetry Festival
where I am going to read my poems. When she arrives at my house
I see that she is using a cane to walk.
“I hurt my hip,” she says, and I go out to meet her with my own cane
that I need for balance.

In Hoboken, we find a space on the street
a block from the museum. I call it my good parking luck.
We walk toward the museum past the yuppies congregating
in front of the restaurants, talking and laughing.

I am trying to hold onto my friend’s arm, but I keep tripping
over her cane. I laugh at us, hobbling along, but then I turn
to the sound of men laughing and see a young man aiming
a camera at us as though we belong in a display case.

Maybe to him, who is not even 30,
we look like old Italian ladies in black dresses
from 1940s Hoboken, out of place in this upscale city
on the river with its condos and apartments and restaurants
and its young people
who take pictures of us
to show to their friends
so they too can laugh.

CATHERINE PRITCHARD CHILDRESS

He Said Yes

He called it our *marital bed*, declared it time to return;
leave our daughter’s twin—my retreat since he’d said yes.
Did you kiss her? Yes. More? Yes. Everything.