



[Home](#)

[Winter-Spring 2013](#)

[Fall-Winter 2012-2013](#)

[Summer-Fall 2012](#)

[Spring-Summer 2012](#)

[Autumn-Winter 2011-12](#)

[Summer 2011](#)

[Winter/Spring 2011](#)

[Autumn/Winter 2011](#)

[Summer 2010](#)

[Spring 2010](#)

[Winter 2010](#)

[Autumn 2009](#)

[Summer 2009](#)

[Spring 2009](#)

[Autumn 2008](#)

[Summer 2008](#)

[Spring/Summer 2008](#)

[Winter/Spring 2008](#)

[Editor's Note](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[Contact](#)

Three Poems

By Mitchell Krochmalnik Grabois

Sleep Apnea and Incontinence

A cross-section of a woman
a woman as seen by computerized tomography
or magnetic resonance imaging
She disrobes

Though her image is blurred
her nipples are as sharp as a gramophone's needle
and when she rubs them against you
antique music fills the room and you find that
you cannot talk
even breathe
You feel terrified
a middle of the night apnea moment
but somehow the cells of your body soften
and air sweeps into your lungs

The music spills out of you
as if
you've become incontinent
all over your body
and the waste water is music
classical music

The blurred cross-section of a woman disrobes
sheds her filmy shift
It floats to the floor like a feather
She lifts her foot to enter the tub
Her pubic hair is black and luxuriant

In the tub she finds two poems
that someone has left for her to find
She wrings them out as if they are sponges
Images run down the drain before they register in her mind
She realizes that she has acted carelessly, stupidly

They are gone forever
Maybe they could have saved her
Maybe they were the one formula
that could have saved her

In the Master's Bed

I slept in van Gogh's bed in Arles
I hid in a closet until the staff had gone
No one discovered me until the next morning

At home I sleep naked
Here I donned a long nightgown I had

found in another closet
Perhaps it belonged to van Gogh himself

It was lucky I was clothed because the young woman who found me
pulled back the sheet and blanket
to expose me
It was cold in the room
and would have been colder if I'd been naked

I had laid my eyeglasses and
cheap plastic Casio watch on van Gogh's bedside table
If the mademoiselle had been a quicker thinker
she would have grabbed them immediately
because then I would have been disoriented in space and time
helpless and easily subdued
even by her
a pale young woman with thin arms

who grew up in Arles and never left it
except once to take the train to Paris with her parents
where she saw East Indians selling luggage
Arab women with facial tattoos
Africans with long, ornate dresses and babies they carried
in slings
It was all very strange and not what she had expected except for the
Eiffel Tower
which towered above everything and reassured her
that she was still in France

Another time
she traveled to Saintes Marie de La Mer
on the Mediterranean
to attend the funeral
of an aunt whom she'd never met
her mother's sister
long-estranged

Out the door of the funeral home
she saw the sun sparkle on the sea
which suggested to her that death was irrelevant

She pulled back the coarse sheet and rough blanket to uncover me
It was cold in the room
She grasped my hands
--she was deceptively strong and I could not pull away--
and examined them
Under my fingernails
she found evidence of paint

You are a painter, she said
I said nothing

With difficulty I finally regained my hands
put on my eyeglasses and cheap Casio watch
that I'd bought in America

What are you doing here? she asked

You should not be here

Again, I let silence be my answer

She left the room
went off, I thought, to fetch the authorities
I took the opportunity
to jump out a window
then over a fence
I ran away through fields
that were wavy and disorienting

Buying Bitter Hatred

With taxpayer money
my money and yours
successive American administrations
purchased the enmity of the Middle Eastern people

their bitter hatred

by supporting autocrats who supported us
and kept the region stable
by keeping their people down

With the Sphinx and the Pyramids at his back
this is what the President of the Egyptians
told us
in 2012

everything we had denied
since 9/11/ 2001

Here the Knowledge came again
chasing our denial

Mitchell Krochmalnik Grabois was born in the Bronx and now splits his time between Denver and a one-hundred-and-twenty-year-old, one room schoolhouse in Riverton Township, Michigan. His short fiction and poetry appears in close to two hundred literary magazines, most recently *The T.J. Eckleberg Review*, *Memoir Journal*, *Out of Our* and *The Blue Hour*. He has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize, most recently for his story "Purple Heart" published in *The Examined Life* in 2012. His novel, *Two-Headed Dog*, published by Xavier Vargas E-ditions, is available for all e-readers for 99 cents through [Amazon](#), [Barnes and Noble](#) and [Smashwords](#). A print edition is also available through Amazon.

Copyright 2013 © Mitchell Krochmalnik Grabois. This work is protected under the U.S. copyright laws. It may not be reproduced, reprinted, reused, or altered without the expressed written permission of the author.
