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Three Poems by Lyn Lifshin

If Those Blossoms Don't Come

if the tangerine doesn't
fill the house with thick
sweetness. If you put
your hands over your
ears one more time
when I'm talking. If
there's another month
of wanting to sleep all
day, the cat the warmest
sweet thing I can imagine.
If this damn rain doesn't
let up, I'm going to
have to rewrite the story
you've got in your head
about us and I don't
think you will like
the ending

Montmartre

Haven't you wanted, sometimes, to
walk into some painting, start a new
life? The quiet blues of Monet would
soothe but I don't know how long I'd
want to stay there. Today I'm in the
mood for something more lively,
say Lautrec's Demimonde. I want
that glitter, heavy sequin nights.
You take the yellow sunshine for
tonight. I want the club scene
that takes you out all night. Come
on, wouldn't you, just for a night or
two? Gaslights and absinthe, even
the queasy night after dawn. Wouldn't
you like to walk into Montmartre
where everything you did or
pre-Aids with the drinkers and
artists and whores? Don't be so P.C.,
so righteous you'd tell me you haven't
imagined this? Give me the Circus
Fernando, streets where getting stoned
was easy and dancing girls kick high.
It's just the other side of the canvas,
the thug life, a little lust. It was good
enough for Van Gogh and Lautrec,
Picasso. Can't you hear Satie on the
piano? You won't be able to miss
Toulouse, bulbous lips, drool. Could
you turn down a night where glee
and strangeness is wide open? Think
of Bob Dylan leaving Hibbing. A little
decadence can't hurt. I want the swirl
of cloth under changing colored lights,

nothing square, nothing safe, want to
can can thru Paris, parting animal
nights, knees you can't wait
to taste flashing

April, Paris

Nothing would be less shall we call it what it is, a cliché than April in Paris. But this poem got started with some thing I don't think I could do but it reminded me of Aprils and then three magazines came with Paris on the cover. Sometimes I'm amazed at all the places I'm not, lets say Paris since actually it's only March but in the magazines they are at outdoor cafes which must be quite chilly now. And I forgot the cigarette smoke, until I see many in the photographs are holding what I'm sure isn't a pen. I wondered how they can always be eating, biting and licking something sweet and still have the most gorgeous bodies. I wonder too how my friend, once an actress, so maybe that's a clue, could dress up in scanty, naughty, as she puts it clothes for her husband while I am sitting here in baggy jeans and torn sweatshirts. I'm wondering if it's because he's lost his job and she is trying to cheer him up. I began thinking of Paris when she described the umbrella she decorated with drops of rain, how she just wore a garter belt under it. I thought of tear shaped drops of rain I made for the Junior Prom's April in Paris, long before I felt the wind thru my hair on Pont Neuf. It's there in the photograph which I hope is more original than the idea of the photograph because I plan to use it on my next book. I wish I could feel what she must, dolled up, trying to soothe this man and getting off on it. As for me, only imagining you, the one with fingers on me, holding me on the page of a book could make me as excited

Publishers have printed more than 120 of **Lyn Lifshin's** books. She also has edited four anthologies of poetry. Her recent books: *The Licorice Daughter: My Year with Ruffian* (Texas Review Press), *Another Woman Who Looks Like Me* (Black Sparrow at Godine), following *Cold Comfort* and *Before It's Light, Desire, and 92 Rapple*. Books just out: *All the Poets Who Have Touched Me, Living and Dead* and *All True, Especially the Lies*. Forthcoming books include *Tsunami as History* (PoetryRepairs.com) and *A Girl Goes into the Woods* (New York Quarterly Books).

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