

KRIS DORN

wandering from moment to moment

i often wonder while wandering
whether life is to be tethered,
why restriction overrules abstraction,
where defeat demands attention,
when courage falls short to fear,
who will persevere,
what will coax resolve into returning,
worthwhile battles resurface.
i often wander while wondering
weathered life is to be tendered.

DODIE MILLER

The Moms of Drug Addicts (1970s)

She is pacing the hall of a mercy hospital—
Maybe she is a widow, husband in the ground,
Younger children at home—
But she paces the hall of a mercy hospital,
And she hopes for it,
Because,
That older son (maybe oldest),
The one with the long hair
He's done it again--
With his drugs.
And now he's here,
In this mercy hospital,
And his mother is crying so hard
In the linoleum-lined, window-filled hall,
That she almost forgets to pray for mercy.

Her son was the one sitting on the curb.
His legs a denim arch over the gutter.
He was nothing special around here.
But then, everybody saw—from little kids
To old people,
They saw “the nod” go too far,
And as he fell over his knees into the street,
The life kicking out of him,
Somebody called for help.

A year or two before,
This boy's spirit was on the stage,
Asking in a calm tenor, “Where Do I Go?”
He rationalized with “Walking in Space,”
And he asked the essential question,
In two-part harmony: “Why don't my mother love me?”

He dropped out to keep himself from war,
And now his mother's in hell.
She's pacing the hall in one of those outfits,
You know the kind,
70's mom outfits—a beret, a tam, or turban on her head,
Her body wrapped in Halston-esque dress, cable knit sweater, or caf-
tan,

Maybe a plaid skirt, and those orange-brown leather boots that zip on the side,
Or earth shoes.
Whatever she wears, she makes a pitiful figure.
She beseeches the doctors in the accents found around here—Irish, black American, Italian, Hebrew--
And they snatch their arms back, and answer her the same: “Wait and see.”
Which translates to “fuck off” in any language.
So she will pace these halls,
Boots, berets, and all,
Because her oldest boy, well, he ain’t doing too good,
And she pauses in front of one of the windows,
The city of millions writhes under the gray,
And she knows there are other mothers,
Whose sons sit in the alleys and gutters,
With belts around their arms,
On their way to the mainline,
Instead of the frontline.
And she sniffs back her feelings,
And realizes dead is dead.

JESSIE REBIK

