

The Laws of Desire

"'I am cock crazy,' my landlord, a quite ordinary aficionado by Balinese standards, used to moan as we went to move another cage, give another bath, or conduct another feeding. We're all cock crazy.'"

C. Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight"

Smart money bet my corner's spurs:

small-fisted, blonde, from out-of-town--

a goddamn lawyer. Easy win.

My shoulder shiftings, my feathery,

glib footwork, stunned the ringside fans.

I suck, I blow, I preen, I fluff:

I'm one cock who can really crow:

a black hen can sit in my mouth.

Aim low and cut deep--I turn

him into a Cubist canvas.

Landlords and crackhead debutantes

are forced to swear off creeds and boys;

crotchkick, and double slashing, was my

corsage, my grande jeté, of blood

and skin and sky as divas oohed

the zig-zag meateating with glee.

The spit-suck melodrama's Round Two

became circling and fighting words.

He tried clichéd chicanery--

pratfalls, near-truths about my mom--

(Cont.)

("Laws," cont., no break)

but I soon caged him with razor
anarchy. Like Richard Speck
I bombed his heart with gloved missiles.
His soup-can, Nordic eyes refused to close
and the praying crowd started to jeer:
one would be wearing muddy, mythy earth.

Our fathers switched odds, called Hollywood,
friends did it in the balcony, and
butt-heavy girls teared, then swooned.
The ref declared it a draw
and jumped into his wife's arms,
but the world there demanded nothing
less than sanctioned days of mourning.
The girl we're fighting over was not

even there or cared. She hung out
at school, escaping her mom's stroke
and father's rage by living for
art classes. Today she was taught
how to construct environments,
to subtract technique from blue gods.
This moony war slightly teased her pride
as friends said nothing, nothing
but pot could help and stay indoors.
She then could ignore the heat's dry sums

(Cont.)

("Laws," cont., no break)

and create lights and bright white doors,
ask little from the Pope, awake
at dusk and exile speech and hands
to pound, to mold, misshapened urns,
to fire the raw, near-red, clumped clays
of mother rocking numb in snow
and wind and silence, shoulders bent
and willing anytime to snap
in half onto the cement floor.