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Breughel Again, Brussels

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Breughel Again, Brussels

She scoops the frites into the paper cone,
Arms like melting wax.
Oily warmth glowing yellow.
Kermess.
I eat, walking,
scenery sliding down my throat.

Circling.
Midnight in a crowd,
We move together.
Around lipstick and frizzed hair,
Men with scars,
Arab boys with smirks
Pinching butts.
Moving

Around the rides with Techno music.
Americanized.
"Le Splash"
"Le Rock"
"Youpi!"
Steel rotations.

A boxing match is about
To start.
I stop
Next to a tall man in a fez.
He turns and shows me
His golden teeth.
*At the Kermess, you have to keep
Moving or you'll slip under.*

Slot machines.
Dart games.
Herrings and chestnuts.
Cotton Candy.
Fleshy Women, oiled,
Edible.

Flemish laughs,
French whispers

And sex noises in corners
Behind the stands.
In the painting,
A man in a bodkin with an erection.
Here, pareil:
Spandex and hard-ons.

“Le Splash”
Again.
Lights and motors,
Screams of thrills
Of the circling carnival machines.
Clunk and fall.

Spinning again.
Upside down
In Flemish, like Breughel.
“Le Rock.”
A boy in a suit, slicked,
I looked too long
And he follows me.
I can feel my hips swaying.

French whispers:
C'est marrant, hein, on tourne.
Cement littered
Mayonnaise and frites,
Waffle fragments
Greasy napkins.

Screaming mouths.
He is following me,
My hips move nervous.
A woman with one arm.
A boy with an eyepatch.
A cigar, ash in my hair.
I turn
And the crowd is rushing at me.

He is there, his gray suit,
With a rose.
I have to turn back,
Moving with the others
In our circle.
And he is beside me.

Rotating skewers of lamb
Dripping fat.
Cherry-filled gaufres.
I try to smile.
His slight mustache.
I pull the wrapper from the rose.
Its petals break off the
Bulb, rotted.

His lips open:
A golden tooth.
Ferris wheel.
"Youpi!"
Slot machines,
Ring toss.
There is a man with a spider monkey
Spinning Roulette for gerbils.

I push into a knot of people,
Soft bodies,
Polyester, cotton, patches of sweat.
The rose falls to the cement
With cigarette
Wads of gum, butts.

Someone hit a jackpot.
I have lost him.
The crows moves on and I relax,
And follow the Techno
Screams and motors,
Red, blue, orange.
"Le Splash."
French Fries.
She scoops the frites into the paper cone.

Adrienne Fair '96