

Piquant Notions, Thorns AND Caledonian Graveyards

By [Susie Gharib](#) (December 2021)



Le Dejeuner, Pierre Bonnard, 1923

Piquant Notions

A male who is capable of befriending the female species
without coveting, lusting, or salacious caprices,
without matrimonial bargaining or mistress-solicitations.

A nimble mind,
with an agility that construes what lies behind
a hard-knit brow,
or a translucent smile,
without any linguistic strife.

A ban on space invasions,
on every type of celestial contamination,
and all astrological abominations.

An upright judge.

A decent neighbor who does not eavesdrop.

A mighty nation that does not boycott.

The freedom that is not purchased with blood.

Thrones

Is it a sculptured piece of stone
for which a brother and sister would cut each other's throat,
for which many nations would wallow in baths of blood,
upon which a monarch would sit all radiant and snug
like a bird that has hatched with the warming breath of God?

Is it forged with molten gold
that faeries had quarried from the nether world,
where boys and girls,
blacksmiths and lords,
possess this ore
like the copper that fills our shops and homes?

Is it a seat of padded cork,
meant to keep a reign afloat,
despite revolts,
when a tyrannical ruler is flagrantly at fault?

Is it a mound of piled-up straw
that a long line of chieftains, knights and nobles
has molded into a solid form
for King Arthur alone,
who would rule with a scepter like Aaron's rod?

Caledonian Graveyards

I lay my head on a floral sheet,
turquoise and yellow, blue and green,
the shutters of my eyes, two heavy lids,
craving respite from toil and spleen,
for sleep deprivation is the latest theme.

When no bullets or rockets can rend the air,
no ambulance sirens or a funeral hearse,
a domestic soprano as shrill as shells
orchestrates its daily unnerving soundtracks.

When no yells rebound from neighborly hells,
celebrating the sanctity of matrimonial bonds,
a verbal warfare commences its march,
revisiting the ills of the present and the past.

I yearn for Iona, for a monastic cell,
for the wilderness of the Hebrides, for tranquil Largs,
for Glencoe's heaths, for the Isle of Skye,
for the stillness of Caledonian graveyards,