

Politicians: Two Poems

by Kirby Olson (February 2018)

Helen and Eris: A Tale of Two Women



Artwork by Politicalfolley

Beauty is an archer.

—Socrates, quoted by Xenophon

She knows what it is to be Venus at tennis
to make her shirtsleeves crisp at the fold.
At Wimbledon or at the Australian Open

she irons her sleeves, makes the wrinkles clean.
Sips the Pepsi at the patio tables, and relaxes
to be adored, in yachts, on jets,
on movie sets, she plows the dark earth like a ship
across the wine-dark seas in search of Paris!
Aphrodite lives! She is the way a sweater fits.
Helen is the way one leg crosses over another.
Helen! Helen! Helen! The million faces of Helen!
Past chrysanthemum flowers, lime
weathervane, evening blue door,
along the sidewalk, shaded lawn, she strolls!

Forget potatoes and the deprivations of the poor!
In Moby Dick the whale bashes the Pequod.
At Amsterdam and 72nd, a turquoise pantsuit says,
“Good evening,” and shakes your hand,
As she sips at the remains of a liquefied pop.

This is not a disheveled woman, not unkempt.
She is professional, and more than solicitous.
Out of her forehead creeps a Narwhal's tooth.
She ask you for your vote, and eyes your reaction.

She will spear you with it in the name of the poor.

Her tooth is stranger than fiction!

In Praise of Industrial Fabrication



Artwork by Politicalfolley

For Donald J. Trump

S mokestacks glistened with combustion
in the Victorian gloaming,
as bats veered,
and anarchists at Homestead
rained down bullets on strike-breakers.

Due to Tammany and its discontents,
the bourgeoisie relocated to China,
where a military could control dissidents,
mowing them down for capitalism.
Carnegie Steel became Shanghai Steel.

Babies fall down circular staircases in Escher prints,
within recursive architecture,
while playing with building blocks.
Capitalism and communism collude to
bilk consumers using Chinese penicillin.

The cowboys' Stetsons are still made in Texas, but
the steel for our bridges is made in China, as well as
our pants and shirts and underwear,
our baseballs and footballs and basketballs.
The Chobani plant opened up in 2007, and

a modicum of steel is still produced at Homestead.
We still produce infotainment, such as elections.
However, our bullets are made in Mexico.

Can someone bring the Rust Belt back to life?

Let he of the golden daughters, he of the golden towers,

Let he of the radiant mind reaching back to Abraham,

To Samson, to Christ, to Ford and Rockefeller,

Let him unite once more the peoples of the Book.

Let him revive Ohio and Michigan, and PA.

Let Donald Trump make America great again. Amen.

Kirby Olson is a tenured English professor at SUNY-Delhi in the western Catskills. His books include a novel (*Temping*), about an English professor who starts a circus in Finland; a book of poems entitled *Christmas at Rockefeller Center*