

# Three Sonnets

by Ankur Betageri (April 2018)



*The Massacre*, Grace Hartigan, 1952

## **Mauser-bearer, Will I Ever have Peace with You?** (After Amoretti 57)

Mauser-bearer, will I ever have peace with you?  
I beg you, please end this war  
These arguments I cannot bear to pursue  
Nor wish to outdo you in wrangling and torture:  
So weak are my powers and so deep my wounds  
That I feel I'll collapse, die on the spot  
Seeing how my heart's pierced all around  
With a thousand bullets which your tongue has shot  
Yet speak sharply still, cut my calls  
Revel in clawing games, in ritual assault  
O cruel one—why do you erect these walls  
And slaughter him that would for you fight?  
Imitating the poets, I had reached this wretched state  
And thought fighting with shrews was Man's estate.

## **Shall I Compare You to a Muskmelon Bright?**

*(After Shakespeare's Sonnet 18)*

Shall I compare you to a muskmelon bright?  
You are more luscious, more immutably fresh:  
Muskmelons last not, after summer's height  
Their flavour lingers, like the memory of their flesh.  
Their taste too declines, like the delicate air of morn  
You can't stay their passage from fruition to rot;  
By farmers, and by seasons, from their princely seat torn  
Like all things bright—they appear, and are not.  
But sun-like you rise, ever-radiant and ever-renewed  
Your sweetness welling in speech, loveliness in manner  
A happy bouncing of light, by no limits hemmed  
Your beauty so affecting that language beings to stammer.  
My eyes, my breath, my spirit, awake to your sight  
And find themselves in a life pierced by deathless light.

## **If Language Didn't Stretch and Melt like Cheese**

*(After Shakespeare's Sonnet 116)*

If language didn't stretch and melt like cheese  
Would it wrap around the thousand mysteries of love?  
Love's truth is flux, you can't stabilize what it is  
Or contain it in the coma of a statement: it is a know-how  
Realised in play, no mark can its shifting essence fix.  
An actor is not, but plays, the roles; a body, by playing,  
feels  
For the lover, these are \* \* \* \* kisses, not asterisks  
Life gives the meaning that knowledge steals.  
So if I touch the name and not its referent  
Find thrill in deception than in sober communication  
If my love is a game and not my heart's conferment  
And if joy is to start off and not arrive at a station  
Then let this movement in language be my movement in world  
Let fulfilment be flight—the joy of a humming bird.

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