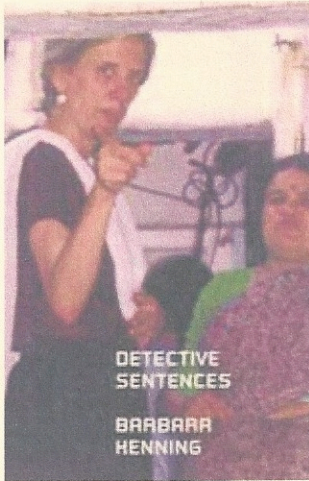


Mohammad's aim, overall, is for the funny bone, stifling outrage by creating more, rendering some poems so nearly unreadable -- line after line of "ack ack ack..." for example -- whole passages seem to be staring us down, daring us to wade through them. But then Mohammad slips in "Ack! a hairball!" and makes it all ha-ha explicable and worthwhile.

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Detective Sentences
Barbara Henning
Spuyten Duyvil 2001

Henning maneuvers conventional, "protestant" plain speech as an unlikely foil to her frequent "yogic twists" mediating "ease and disease." Henning does not attempt structural subtlety in these formal experiments -- alternating for the most part between prose patches and verse couplets. The prose is straightforward, pellucid, and all the more noteworthy in that it unselfconsciously fuses dream imagery with journalistic scrutiny. Her couplets shear experience down to judicious reportage in chilling dualities, points, counterpoints: "I sleep better with my head at the foot of the bed / The guy in the next bed is handcuffed to the rail." "I put oil in his ears... / ...you want me // to pick up the check and then nothing / not even a kiss." "The Trade Center towering over St. Paul's / Two paper cups with coffee on a bench." The value of Henning's experiments, as these examples indicate, is the intensity that appears to be lived out through the brevity of what is expressed.

posted by Jack
5:52 AM

Jack Kimball

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