

Belly Button Patrol

Students fight and students bully.
They cheat to reach their goals.
Students swear and get unruly
But I'm on belly button patrol

They hide in bathrooms sneaking smokes,
Popping pills and smoking bowls.
I'd stop their habit 'fore they snort coke,
But I'm on belly button patrol.

In the cafeteria students cry.
They feel an ache inside their soul
They feel alone and want to die
But I'm on belly button patrol.

I could help them when they're upset
Sit and listen and console .
A willing ear can help them forget
But I'm on belly button patrol

Students work through homework questions
At times frustration takes its toll
but I can't help or make suggestions
Cause I'm on belly button patrol.

T-shirts pictures of drunks and sixpacks,
Ads for cigarettes and Skoal.
Low boxer shorts show plumber's cracks
But I'm just on belly button patrol.

Hemlines rise and hemlines fall
We acknowledge fashion's role
but hiplines lower and shirts get small
and I go on belly button patrol

Navels are dangerous, that's the rule.
We stop it now or lose control.
End up a nudist colony, not a school
That's why I'm on belly button patrol.

THE COLONEL

What you have heard is true. I was in his home. His wife carried a tray of coffee and sugar. His daughter filed her nails, his son went out for the night. There were daily papers, pet dogs, a pistol on the pillow beside him. The moon swung on its bare cord over the house. On the television was a cop show. It was in English. Broken bottles were embedded in the walls around the house to scoop the kneecaps from a man's legs or cut his hands to lace. On the windows were gratings like those in liquor stores. We had dinner, rack of lamb, good wine, a gold bell was on the table for calling the maid. The maid brought green mangoes, salt, a type of bread: I was asked how I enjoyed the country. There was a brief commercial in Spanish. His wife took everything away. There was some talk then of how difficult it had become to govern. The parrot said hello on the terrace. The colonel told it to shut up, and pushed himself from the table. My friend said to me with his eyes: say nothing. The colonel returned with a sack used to bring groceries home. He spilled many human ears on the table. They were like dried peach halves. There is no other way to say this. He took one of them in his hands, shook it in our faces, dropped it into a water glass. It came alive there. I am tired of fooling around he said. As for the rights of everyone, tell your people they can fuck themselves. He swept the ears to the floor with his arm and held the last of his wine in the air. Something for your poetry, no? he said. Some of the ears on the floor caught the scrap of his voice. Some of the ears on the floor were pressed to the ground.

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Carolyn Forché

BOSNIA TUNE

As you pour yourself a scotch,
crush a roach, or check your watch,
as your hand adjusts your tie,
people die.

In the towns with funny names,
hit by bullets, caught in flames,
by and large not knowing why,
people die.

In small places you don't know
of, yet big for having no
chance to scream or say good-bye,
people die.

People die as you elect
new apostles of neglect,
self-restraint, etc. — whereby
people die.

To far off to practice love
for thy neighbor/brother Slav,
where your cherubs dread to fly,
people die.

While the statues disagree,
Cain's version, history
for its fuel tends to buy
those who die.

As you watch your athletes score,
check your latest statement, or
sing your child a lullaby,
people die.

Time, whose sharp blood-thirsty quill
parts the killed from those who kill,
will pronounce the latter tribe
as your type.