

DAYS IN THE LIFE OF A REVOLUTIONARY ANGLOPHONE

She walked aggrissing into the bar
tight blue jeans so high
you could practically feel the seam
rubbing her crotch
turning her on.

Hands scraped into her pockets
swaggering
elbows pushing back
the man-sized jacket.

Breasts skiing
under the clinging T-shirt
nipples
demanding notice.

Men, women, she didn't care.
Her liberated ass
strutted to a table.

She leaned back
shoulders rocking the chair
challenging
all comers.

A beer! she said, Labatt's cinquante
and slapped her money down, and smoked.
Breasts pendulous on the table
skimming the surface
swaying back and forth, the friction
pleasing her.

It was a total turn-on.
No need
for puny lovers here.

She walked home
through dog-shit streets
carefully avoiding
the melting turds.
Tucked her body in
against the dampening cold.

A man approached, said
(or so she thought, his French
was difficult to understand
whispered side-mouthed, two slushing feet
behind her)
Hey baby, where ya goin', can I come wit' ya,
wanna see something special?

Fuck off, she said
executing
a fake karate feint,
and slouched lower
thrusting her sordid boots
up the grey alley-way.

At home
joyously rampaging cockroaches
scurried behind the stove.
She scrubbed the stains of the day
off in the peeling shower.

The next day
it started again.

She went to a demonstration
screamed Quebec libre
(hoping they wouldn't notice
her English accent.)

For the occasion she wore a bra
for stuffing pills inside of
to use if they put her in prison.
She had heard
how the female cops there search you
moving their hands slowly
feeling under and between.

She hesitated between
running shoes and hiking boots
finally decided to opt for speed
in case of charging motorcycles.

She kept her mouth sour
in case someone French approached her.
She could pretend churlishness
if she didn't understand.

But no one did.

That night, she decided
to pick someone up in a bar.
She practised smiling
considered
whether to wear her hair
seductively, covering her face
or pulled back tight.
An escetic revolutionary.

Looking in the mirror
her nipples showed through.
It would do.

In the bar
bodies squeezed on long benches.
She spotted a candidate
discussing Marx in English.
She slid beside him.

A beer! she said, Labatt's cinquante
thus revealing to the Marxist
her knowledge of the difference
between unionized and non-unionized brew.
And besides, she sympathized
with the Quebecois, even though
she was one of the oppressors.

(Picking up a Marxist
is not an easy thing to do.
You have to pick them carefully.
Many are virgins.)

Sitting behind him
she rested her left breast lightly
in the palm of her hand.

And that evening
it started again.

Rhoda Howard
McMaster University