

Fox and Witch

Ken Lifshitz 1966

Right around the corner
we bought some lox an
bumped into a fox,
“Can I come along” he said
his tail swished the summer sidewalk.
I too innocently agreed.
My father was at work this morning
and I beat a fly to death with a
bran muffin,

(“Please Scram!”) I said
please be discreet animal and beat it
I have sandwiches to make
before dad returns

Reminder!-Squids! Yids. Incomprehensible?
Yes, you silly kids,
I am brimming with lies
as the closet is full of father’s ties

He ran eleven races last year
losing every one,—the french fry man
Who last year sat in the bushes
with a great fiery fan,
caught pneumonia
and died.

(Elegy)
No pride called forth his spawn and
only we were there to mourn
as we cried in tides
all along we cried and
hide our bloodied eyes
in masks of future’s kind
supervisors and the tides envelopes
—crashed ashore like stamped lunch bags.

And the fox who was there to mock our screaming
and the our tears sent
streaming down
foreign cheeks would
stand immobile
like the frozen ocean foam,
had we glimpsed once more his fiery fan
and jewels which spread from every fold
as if he'd tried to grow old.

The sea jews
remember shoes
that once stood up to
abrogate the date
that lie like rotten fruit
or orange rinds left in the bathroom.

I repeated again
there's work I must do
so now you go! You go! You go!-- Victor!
--he moved not an inch
and I scanned his eyes (as kin to his intention)
which not an hour ago had waxed light and gay
and where now foulness was brewing that
darkened the day.
Next to the door he stood
Shadow darkening the maple wood
That wily shag,--he slyly wagged,
I shivered,--
He winked and grinned at me
with deadly mock felicity.

The way was barred
but in my hand,
still lay the knife
with which the bread and lox
I had sliced
I gripped it and lunged, like an apple turnover
His fangs met squarely, the thrust of my arm
but the pointed blade did him more harm
So as our blood mingle in strife off Corfu
My terror flared,
(what was I to do)?
For he was quick to sense that fear
and withdrew his teeth to find more

deadly territory beneath the ear!
But the lily gripped in my teeth
for a half second lured his gaze aside,
It was enough
With my blade in his heart he laid down and died.