

# Segue

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online literary journal

## MARIT ERICSON



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## be a mediator!

**for the record:** —between your perceived generation  
and any generation  
that hasn't found itself yet

**for stimulation, kicks:** —as a famed duck equivalent  
but more in-jokey, like a talking numchuck  
or a singing slice of ham

**for poetry:** —like a you a coupla folks knew  
in a gas station once: a spent wishbone: a plotless boy  
with near-verbal abilities

**for now:** lull the present into being true  
and take a picture / pizza / pulse by gum, heaven  
may never interject

# Lemon drops, or lack thereof

Oh, these subliminal congeries in the mind-matter of the artist!

So many forms of the noun *haphazard*,  
nickel-and-dime-sized epiphanies  
dropped into jukeboxes made of snow: *sussurusussurus*

*poof* . . .

Alas, if only memory were so cooperative.

Yet it is a *fact* one imagines in a faint  
hallway of uncertain vintage,  
umpteenth panels  
from an all-too-numbered childhood:

age six grade two teddies four and *yes*: only the one moving backcloth!

Push a hand into its surface,  
and isn't it always  
that welt  
of sadness (two yin-yang cakes, minus whatever outer war)

crumbling into an everpresent lack: for me,

that hum blanketing perceptions,  
soft-focus roses, tulips, whatever  
they were?

I am so often speechless, and what do I say: everything happens.

# When I think of ribbons, apparently I'm a girl

o glass,  
    all  
    the  
    dresses  
in  
your  
    store                   (strip mall)  
    thin  
    and  
    widen  
with  
the  
(oddly evening) seasons,  
    svelte  
    heralds  
    copping  
    banners  
of  
our  
    blushes  
    and  
(painstaking)           hips,  
    skin-  
    tight  
    and  
    pinned  
with  
eyes  
that  
    peer                   (not always a  
    into  
    and  
friend) away  
    from  
(the margins of           the body), really.

## Author Notes

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*Marit Ericson has lived most of her life in New England and West Virginia, two complex and beautiful places. She will be working toward an M.F.A. at the University of Iowa.*

### About the Work

To me, a poem is a voiced form that melds intuition and language. Elements like identity, musicality and, say, karmic cake emerge in the making, like a sketch of a basket—or, say, an existentially aware basket—after testing, erasing and committing myriad hatchmarks to a page. And *voilà*: a basket! Or, in this case, a poem.

Many poems start from a trigger that blends into (and often out of) revision. As for “be a mediator!,” I’d encountered a vivid word (I think it was “gung-ho”) in the course of various readings, and I was inspired by its *let’s go!* energy to create a plucky, headstrong voice. The emerging poem showed signs of infomercialese, a breezy idiom that’d like to sell you something (“by gum,” anyone?); I used boldfaced anaphora to sharpen its piquant bursts of intellect. Though it’s hard to articulate this precisely, at some point substance and form seemed to click: the poem felt as complete as it would get.

Judging from their flow and seeming inevitability, many poems seem like they were a cinch to write. But, as another poem meta-notates, the writing process can be quite painstaking. In fact, the creation of “When I think of ribbons, apparently I’m a girl” felt less like writing than like sculpting a tiny constellation, fastening and reordering stars into a delicate pattern. The form was so exacting and for such a short poem that I often thought, *I’ll just put this aside, I’ll move on*. But, quite prosaically, I kept with it. Persistence may be the plainest of strategies, but it often seems to work.

Lacking a fixed form, an artist might feel overwhelmed by the infinite tangents of the imagination, like the speaker of “Lemon drops, or lack thereof.” Nonetheless, the very exasperation of said speaker helped me to come up with surreal imagery (“jukeboxes made of snow,” “yin-yang cakes”) and to create an almost operatic tone and command of language (the dipping stanzaic forms, the cliff-hanging “for me”). In creating this poem, I felt a little like that “moving backcloth”—floaty, detached, collapsing into the words for it. And yet, I was also moved by the speaker’s desperation, a state that might be latent in anyone, artist or not: “I am so often speechless, and what do I say: everything happens.”

So. Are these poems? Sophisticated toys? Closed systems? Self-parodies? Self-tragedies? Such doubts are prominent as I decide if I should share my work. That said, I might not have a categorizable style, but I think each of these poems has a clear voice, one that is uniquely surprising, rhythmic, smart and beautiful. And even if many don’t see them as poems, these “formal” voices might open up how someone thinks about the genre. I mean, just how do you approach a poem that features a “singing slice of ham”?

## **Marit Ericson on the Web**

[www.prickofthespindle.com/poetry/2.4/ericson/good\\_night\\_and\\_all\\_that.htm](http://www.prickofthespindle.com/poetry/2.4/ericson/good_night_and_all_that.htm)

[www.prickofthespindle.com/poetry/2.4/ericson/the\\_stoic\\_subliminal.htm](http://www.prickofthespindle.com/poetry/2.4/ericson/the_stoic_subliminal.htm)