4-1-1977

The Old Philosopher

Linda Sillitoe

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq

Recommended Citation

Sillitoe, Linda (1977) "The Old Philosopher," BYU Studies Quarterly: Vol. 17 : Iss. 2 , Article 10. Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol17/iss2/10

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in BYU Studies Quarterly by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
The Old Philosopher

Linda Sillitoe

It is worth the coin in pain to wrench my head, confronting the repeated noise of bird that interrupts internal tedium. There. Upon that slanting post a red smudge between dark wings, a robin’s word to anyone, “here I am, I am,”

is the second thing I like. The first is this: my cell is three doors past the delivery room and every child drenched in sudden air who finds his toes unraveled from his hair, hands flapping no boundaries, the womb well lost, wails his knowledge, I exist!

My numbed and stricken wife, for my pleading
blinked one eye to affirm identity
true as one Indian intricately beading
a bricklayer slapping strophe after strophe
like a typewriter bleed blow breath
build brick whack blood death

These thoughts unlatch the joinings of the walls which float away. The sounds of bird and squalling infant keen the idiom of skies— not of stars, but of unseen thinkers differing as star from star. One like a comet falls in wingless flight, a newborn human cries.

My voice is mine, my hands grope loosening air, within my brain a heart, within an ear which hears another voice. Know that I am Alpha and Omega, Lord of sky and Earth, beginning and end, exalt and damn.

The robin spoke the word: Ego, I am.

Linda Sillitoe is a graduate of the University of Utah and a widely-published poet.