

Winter on Wall Street

A Novella in Verse



Eileen R. Tabios

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Front Cover Art: “The Demidoff Table” (1845) by Lorenzo Bartolini (Italian, 1777–1850). Commissioned by Prince Anatole Demidov (1845–1870). Italian, Florence. Marble. H. 64 3/8 x W. 51 1/4 x Diam. 49 3/4 x in. (163.5 x 130.2 x 126.4 cm). Sculpture. Gift of le Duc de Loubat, 1903. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Interior Art: “Face Defense of Mail” (15th Century). German. Copper alloy (latten) and iron. Gift of Prince Albrecht Radziwill, 1927. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Book designer: Aileen Cassinetta

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Locofoco Chaps is dedicated to publishing politically-oriented poetry.

Chicago, USA, 2017

*I am looking at these same stars and
see dying men in white shirts toiling past
midnight in the skyscrapers of
Manhattan.*
—from “My Staten Island Ferry Poem”
by Eileen R. Tabios

**About the Front Cover Image:
“The Demidoff Table” by Lorenzo Bartolini**

The subject is a complex, cosmological allegory best described in the sculptor's own words: "Stretched out upon the plan of the world is Cupid, god of generation, sustaining and watching over the symbolic genius of dissolute wealth without virtue, who snores in his sleep . . . dreaming of past diversions in pleasure. Left to himself, the genius of ambitious rectitude in work sleeps the agitated sleep of misfortune and glory . . . his head extending beyond the periphery of the world."

—www.metmuseum.org

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Chapter One

Forgive Me (1)

You had unending legs

The curve of your breasts
beneath the gauzy dress
was sublime

You'd paid \$300 to
have your hair colored

Forgive me, Blonde Girl
(whose name I never knew)
I said, "Going to men's room"
but grabbed my coat instead
to walk out of the restaurant
for a loud, hot crib where
people were more *everything*

How long did you sit
enduring the condescension
of waiters with scabbed hearts

How did it feel to rise—
still uncertain—from your chair
to leave the restaurant
to stand amidst the falling snow

...

barely enough money in your purse
to return to a tiny apartment
crowded with girls just like you

*

*That taste of iron
under your tongue
became familiar to me*

Chapter Two

To Have and To Have Not

*The game was called To Have and To Have Not.
The idea was you had to think of something you
had done that nobody else at the table had
done, or something you had never done that
everybody else had done.
—from The Fall of Princes by Robert Goolrick*

Beginnings are always sexual—

Sex on the pitcher's mound
Threeways
Masturbate in a public theater

O grief from the banality of eros

Oh grief alchemized into philosophy—

Never taken a photograph
Never been swimming (“Never been
in the water!”)
Never tasted beer

Oh surprise—

“Sex with an animal”
“Me too!”

O grief ...

A girl killed herself because I dropped
her
"Me too ..."

To Have = To Have Not...

*

*The mirror never reflects
poison
only its corrosive expansion*

Chapter Three

Wall Street Music

Success offers a million
musical nuances

Failure is merely a monotone
banging of a brass gong

*

*Hearing is visually stimulated
(according to neuroscientists)—*

*a plummeting line
slashing across the computer screen*

*equals the sound of beaten metal
being beaten, beaten, beaten ...*

Chapter Five

Forgive Me (2)

You bathed topless
at the Throne Hotel beach

Brett bet me
I couldn't fuck you
by midnight

I showed up at 11:59
with you on my arm
and noted, "You lose"

Brett gave me the hundred
right in front of you

Brazilian girl whose name
I never knew

*

*I plucked words
from your language
only to denote meals
destined for my mouth
indifferent
even as it chewed
and chewed and chewed*

Chapter Six

Fashion-enable

At the slot machine: 70-year-old
in housedress and bedroom slippers
cigarette dangling from withered lips

How can a habit so sexy in the young
be so repellent in the old

Note to self: give up
smoking at 40. To be ugly
is to watch velvet ropes go up
all over this bottom-line town

I will be the only person
in history to give up smoking
not for health but fashion

*

I courted humans whose

Height

Cheekbones

Waists

Thighs

Ankles

*befitted the contents of my wardrobe
curated by Uncle's British butler*

*Must writing a Poem
be so painful...*

Chapter Seven

Great Britain

We rode around Hyde Park
for four hours

A London cab is like
a sensory deprivation tank
except the meter always ran

You paid with my cash

I went home to crawl
into bed, a six-foot
two-by-four with puffy lips

*

*Story of my inherited life:
zero climax...*

Chapter Eight

Ferrari

Sophia divorced me by 6 o'clock
on the day I got fired

I walked into a Ferrari
dealership, bought a \$300,000 car
whose seats hurt my back

I drove it in pain
until it went for pennies
on the dollar

in the great fire sale
“my life was to become”

*

*Anguish
provides its own momentum*

Chapter Nine

The Firm

Bellowing like a bull in heat
was encouraged

But certain things just weren't done—
we learned them in our first year:

Do not dress better than your boss
Do not get drunker than your boss

Come to work neat and pressed
like a fine pair of sheets

But if your tie was not undone
sleeves rolled up
shirt tail hanging out of your pants
by 9 a.m.
you weren't working hard enough

Never wear Hermes ties—
leave those to lawyers and golfers

Never wear cheap shoes

When you get a new pair
polish them 20 times
before debuting them
Your shoes should not look bought
but like you inherited them
from a rich uncle

Never get a cheap haircut

A bad apartment at a good address
is greater than
a fabulous apartment at a bad address

If your boss gives you a Mont Blanc pen
at the end of a salary negotiation
you were taken to the cleaners

Never insult a client—no matter
how stupid or rude, they have
the required \$20 million to open
an account at *The Firm*

If one of your colleagues is fired
never speak to him again:
failure is transmittable

If you feel the onset of a heart
attack, leave. If it occurs
at your desk it shows “excessive zeal”

Never show excessive zeal

Never never never
Always always always

*

A wealthy father
can exist
A wealthy uncle? Never

The wealthy never
underestimate
lineage

Chapter Ten

Post Script

“Sophia? It was nice,
though, wasn't it?
For a while ...?”

She paused

“It was ... amusing—
there's a difference”

I watched until she
disappeared. She spoke
to the maître d'
then walked with the revolving door
into sunshine, *radiance*

that became mere stifling heat
when I walked out
back to my job—
staff at petstore—
the whole of my ordinary life ...

*

[...]

that became mere stifling heat
when I walked out
back to my job—
staff at petstore—

the whole of my ordinary life ...

~~but not before she embarrassed me
by picking up the check
for the "one more meal"
I had begged her to allow~~

*

[...]

but not before she embarrassed me
by picking up the check
for the "one more meal"
I had begged her to allow

*

*Caged animals—
Daniel Quinn rightly observes
in his novel Ishmael—
are more thoughtful
than animals in the wild*

*The tiger pacing
wildly within a cage
understands its life
-style is wrong*

*Pacing, the tiger asks pleads
Why, Why, Why...?
until felled by a "final lethargy"
zookeepers recognize as
a rejection of life*

Chapter Eleven

CODA FROM THE HEDGE FUND

*That taste of iron
under your tongue
became familiar to me*

*

*The mirror never reflects
poison
only its corrosive expansion*

*

*Hearing is visually stimulated
(according to neuroscientists)—*

*a plummeting line
slashing across the computer screen*

*equals the sound of beaten metal
being beaten, beaten, beaten ...*

*

*I had sang to you
with zero sincerity*

*

*I plucked words
from your language
only to denote meals
destined for my mouth
indifferent
even as it chewed
and chewed and chewed*

*

*I courted humans whose
Height
Cheekbones
Waists
Thighs
Ankles
befitted the contents of my wardrobe
curated by Uncle's British butler*

*Must writing a Poem
be so painful?*

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zero climax...*

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"Face Defense of Mail"

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About the Author

Eileen R. Tabios has released over 40 collections of poetry, fiction, essays, and experimental biographies from publishers in eight countries and cyberspace. Most recently she released her first trilingual (English, Romanian, Spanish) edition *YOUR FATHER IS BALD* (Bibliotheca Universalis, 2017); *THE OPPOSITE OF CLAUSTROPHOBIA* (Knives, Forks and Spoons Press, 2017); and *AMNESIA: SOMEBODY'S MEMOIR* (Black Radish Books, 2016). She also recently released the following chaps through Locofo:

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Would Have Shown Up in the Photographs*
(with John Bloomberg-Rissman)

*As The MDR Poetry Generator, What
Shivering Monks Comprehend*

COMPREHENDING MORTALITY
(with John Bloomberg-Rissman)

*IMMIGRANT: Hay(na)ku & Other Poems In
A New Land*

*WINTER ON WALL STREET: A Novella
-in-Verse*

Editor, *PUNETA: Political Pilipinx Poetry*

Editor, *Menopausal Hay(na)ku For
P-Grubbers*

More information is available at
<http://eileenrtabios.com>

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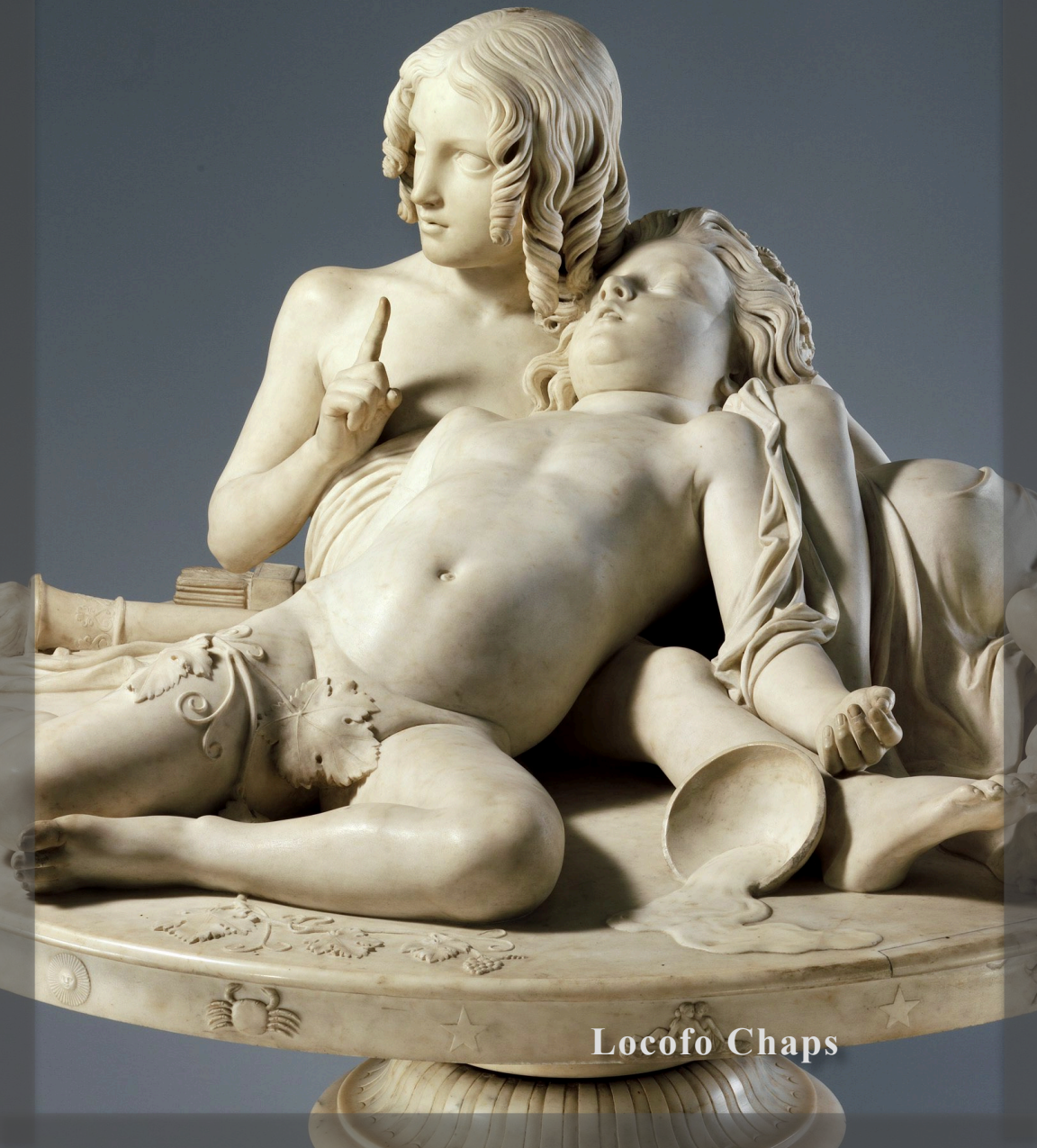
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The poetry of Eileen Tabios invites us to look at what it truly means to be part of the human race, not merely a fragment of it.

—Valerie Morton, *The Poetry Shed* (U.K.)



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