

Maureen Seaton

The Day Uncle Fun Left Chicago, Taking His Robots

The day Uncle Fun left Chicago, taking his robots with him, taking his glow-in-the-dark crucifixes, his chubby blue-haired trolls and retro ducks, his laptop Buddha, pink Slinkies, and wheezy owls who *WHO'd* at us from their holographic farmhouses beside the mini-bongos and stick-on mastodon tattoos and the Hawaiian hula girl bookends that bracketed the Magic Eye paperbacks and the *Poetry for Weddings and Wakes* we shook our heads at, it was so unredeemably cheesy—that day was a mournful day with no comfort for us all. We'd been, we believed, at least the seventh generation of Uncle Fun fanatics, and we faced the dark and padlock where there once were open drawers and sparklers bitterly. Went home to our exploding golf balls, our fart whistles, our smoking babies—never to play again.

When I Was a Slice of History

When I was a slice of history—
tiny boomer flying down streets & stoops
on roller skates tightened with a key—

a replica of my neat-coiffed mom who
winced at my spiking fever & saved my
historical life when the pandemic flu

turned to meningitis during *Guiding Light*—
I never knew what hit my post-war-
duck-your-head-at-the-sound-of-men-in-flight

self in a city where three new jets soared
into bedrooms & ravaged playgrounds.
It was 1952, Newark Airport

closed down for six months until they found
the glitch that triggered the sensational
crashes & we tried to live through sounds

of neighbors fried in their beds, not to mention
I made it through meningitis with no
more than a delicate constitution,

dropped foot, heart murmur, crossed eyes. Not so.
I didn't make it through anything, really.
Haven't flown in forty years. Still flinch below

any skyward sound that's not a bird. See,
there's little time between war & war for peace—
and you can't take trauma out of history.

When I Got the Big C (Again)

Mi no uchi ni shi wa yawarakaki fuyu no ibo
Inside my body death is a soft wintry wart
—Tada Chimako (1930-2003)

I was not surprised. Instead I tumbled
like a kitten down one of the Seven
Summits & hailed a subway train rumbling

hysterically past Times Square. Once in heaven—
I swore to my troupe of imaginary
playdates—I would find a way to haunt them

when they desperately needed a jig, when every
car on the lot demanded repair
and every painting at MOMA turned away

because why bother posing if I'm not there?
Inside my body, death was a soft wintry
wart, I thought, or death was a forlorn pair

of black Nikes waiting for me to try
them on and take them strolling by the moon.
I was not surprised at all. In fact, hi,

Big C, I thought, what took you so long? It's June!
See how well I've played without you? Mumbled
the Big C: Funny kid, I never left you.



Maureen Seaton has authored twenty-one poetry collections, both solo and collaborative, most recently, *Sweet World* (CavanKerry Press, 2019). Her awards include the Iowa Prize, Lambda Literary Award, Audre Lorde Award, an NEA fellowship, and the Pushcart. Her work has appeared in *Best American Poetry* as well as numerous literary journals and anthologies. Her memoir, *Sex Talks to Girls* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, 2018), also garnered a “Lammy”. With poet Neil de la Flor, she edited the anthology *Reading Queer: Poetry in a Time of Chaos* (Anhinga Press, 2018). Find her @mseaton9.