



THOMAS PIEKARSKI

Alchemical

I'll never dance with another!

Not long after the Great Quake
that nearly leveled Spindrift Inn
an echoing "ho-ho-ho"
began to be heard as one ascended
the ghostly stairway that led
to the Wax Museum.

Bombastic recordings hence
incessant in the stairwell,
sales pitches of styrene fishermen
with moving lips who flank
the Museum entrance.
They're vigilant, highly rhetorical,
effective in luring gullible tourists
through the turnstile.

Outside, Monterey Bay's
wimpy black waves splash,
gingerly spanking
the granite offshore mini islands
where seals often lounge.

Those black waves inaudible
in the pale moonlight.

On Cannery Row Super Bowl mania
holds sway. The anticipation electric,
no longer in check, full throttle now:
bodies in motion, palaver plethoric,
Cutty Sark rules, logic on hold.

This year it's the Ravens of Poe's
morose invention against a fortuitous
49er bunch in hot pursuit
of another pot of gold
predicated on Time's
cyclic genesis.

Daily Beat

Obama in denial about the malodorous fiscal crisis.
An ailing Jennifer Lawrence is caught strapless.
The suspended NFL coach is finally reinstated.
Olympic snowmobiler survives a paralyzing crash.
Sonny Bono was stoned when he ran into a tree.
Plane wreck on the Hudson prompts a mass rescue.
The Pentagon boosts its cybersecurity fivefold.
A Venezuelan prison uprising nets 58 deaths.
Get a free rate quote and save with Progressive.
Pro Bowl a boring lopsided victory for the NFC.
Will the Syrians holding Western hostages yield?
Sarah Palin ignominiously dropped from FOX.
Imprisoned OJ owes some 500 million in taxes.
Sorry to see he-man Stan Musial pass at 92.
The S&P rebounds from a temporary melt-up.
Stirring the new National Geographic photos.

The Mix

Thrown into the mix the fixture
on the wall, the thing hung, visible.
Thrown out of the mix the phantasm
that enters dreams nightly, uninvited.
Thrown into the mix belief
there's an urgency to be brief.
Thrown out of the mix attitude,
since it limits psychic amplitude.

Prohibitive Path

I deemed that path prohibitive,
the one where you must have
gun belts strapped across your chest,
prepared to murder your way
past illusory pearly gates.

And it didn't seem to make sense
to adopt opaque philosophies
trying to climb the impossibly
tall and shaky scaffold
that reaches godhead.

Stowed Away

Catholics at Carmel Mission church
kneel or rise at the priest's command.
His sermon revolves around
the aged Zechariah visited
by angel Gabriel arrived with word
that God would be giving him
a son soon. Zechariah wilts, doubtful,
as his wife is too old to bear child.
So God takes away his speech until
a son John the Baptist is born.

And then the priest conducts
an adoring congregation
in electrifying harmonies
drawn from various Psalms.

Along Highway One, a few miles
north of Big Sur, river water
flowing into the oncoming ocean
is completely submerged.
A mind-bogglingly tall rickety old
iron bridge spans a wide gap
in the mountains where that river
merges. From the side of the road
the seacliff drops a sheer 1300 feet

down onto whitewashed waves.

A mile or so above
Half Moon Bay where
freezing ocean water
laps against boats
at Princeton Harbor,
a hamlet called Moss Beach
is a horticultural bonanza,
private, isolated alcove
where during Prohibition
the bootleggers
would unload their bounty
of rotgut moonshine to supply
thriving speakeasies
along the Central Coast.

They stowed the booze
at Frank's Place.
Frank the fink who paid off
cops and was never arrested.

Pescadero Beach is abundantly
covered with piles of driftwood,
enough to have a huge bonfire.

I speculate the Japanese tsunami
responsible for landing it here.
Beachgoers build little driftwood
fortresses for a lark, knowing well
how ephemeral such structures.

Black and white period photos
show Carmel Mission in almost
utter ruin, reduced to one
building, the small basilica,
at that time in great decay.
Thus the present structures
may be considered fake.
The church in which
the faithful pray
but a lovely reproduction,
retro Alta Californiana.

The hiker at Big Sur River bridge,
excited, approached me and asked
if I'd seen the daredevil who ran
to the middle of the span
and jumped, parachuting down
hundreds of feet to disappear.

He had caught this chilling act
on his cell phone camera, but lost
track as the parachute vanished
into the womb of the deep canyon.
He was eager to know
had the parachutist landed safely?
Did anyone come to retrieve him?
How could he possibly get back?

Bootlegger Frank's bar in Moss Beach
has survived for decades, constant
renovations rendering it an in spot
for dining and entertainment, renamed
The Distillery. A ghost they call
the Blue Lady haunts it to this day.
She prowls the lounge, restaurant
and oceanfront grounds, at times
seen frolicking in the gentle surf
that roils and breaks upon the beach
at Shark Reef Cove some 200 feet
below. Unsinkable Shark Reef Cove
where the waves splash and fan out,
dazzle then fizzle like fireworks.