Ink-Stained Women

....ink – stained women are, without a single exception, detestable. Nathaniel Hawthorne

ink-stained woman scribbles in a mixed gender workshop

recalls schooldays of inkwells on desks – nibs & pens

navy blue & black ink – her wardrobe’s favoured colours

contrasted with red & orange

notworsted blue stockings – but blue stocking sentiments

not elegant black silk stockings – but attire of mourning & image of power

stained index finger – scribbled school assignments – tertiary essays

professional papers – legal decisions

fountain pens – biros – Ball Pentel R56’s – illegible hand

replaced by keyboard precision

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1 Quoted in Elaine Showalter, A Jury of Her Peers, from Anne Bradstreet to Annie Proux, Chapter 5 Masterpieces and Mass Markets Virago Great Britain, 2009,p83

ink-stained woman encapsulates her experience a moment in a day
transposes silence into words of grief & protest that burn through thrashing seas
that melt into a fiery horizon with the arc of a crimson sun
at dawn revived she opens her books notebook & computer picks up
her R56 creativity erupts as she seeks companionship in the voices of
other ink-stained women writers poets artists imbued with optimism
buoyed by the iridescent light of blue Murano glass & the contrapuntal colours of a
Matisse canvas

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Dialogue

Babes of the Second World War we live in peace or so we’re told
atrocities buried cities rebuilt refugees migration new homelands
cold war a memory
2003 alliances bring us closer to its own truth & dread
for the great dark birds of history – territory religion oil tyranny Iraq WMD’s
terrorism – peck at suburban nature strips confront material contentment
disturb commuting routines unsettle cosmopolitan delights & neighbourly trust
mock our sense of freedom unravel goodwill & certainties
when & where will the trigger fire why does the earth’s spindle rotate on poverty
corruption genocide exploitation prejudice & ignorance we ask
tyranny of the breast unites with desolate roads of resistance
the biopsied core that malignancy abhors our common language
poems of Adrienne Rich prompt dialogue 1900’s lithographs of Käthe Kollwitz
confront the starvation of children the power of women in adversity
those privileged to live outside the frame do so in the company of denial that
views a televised kaleidoscope of sports cooking self improvement crime
mystery & game shows cloaked by global war games that excise peace

Loula S. Rodopoulos

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W. W. Norton & Company 1993,p3
3 Adrienne, Rich In Those Years Op. Cit.p4
W. W. Norton & Company 1993 p53
5 Adrienne, Rich Foreword to The Fact Of The Door Frame – Selected Poems 1950 – 2001 W.W.
Norton & Company 2002
6 Ibid.

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