

## David Tuvell

### A Woman in the Crowd

We had to be sure, you see,  
that she was not a witch.

Time after time, after all,  
with no answer for us  
of which witch was which.

We grabbed our largest  
speculum, we gouged  
her like a pumpkin, and, yet,  
not a single drop of semen!

She spoke in antique riddles,  
had a hag's crony laugh,  
and she gave us nothing that  
we found we could take back.

**Before You Know It**

I'm sick of your Kristallnacht confessions, Karen.  
And your faith is makeshift, like sex after 30.  
Its unscripted scriptures wail like a liquor-  
pickled Emily Dickenson: "I'm nobody 'n so're you!"

You could go anywhere, speaking English,  
that modern traveler's check.  
I've seen your quad-band smartphone.  
Instead, you stay home every night and audit your day in  
bed,  
obscene with the peat of Mens Rea. You hardly notice the  
shades  
slowly realizing dawn like insomnia  
(that choke chain collar accessory  
you playfully nicknamed *your nocturnal humor*).  
*It's 4 o'clock, why not brew some Breakfast Blend?*  
You know full well that your days will be only dancing and  
surfing,  
just a matter of floating your buoyant flesh pound by  
pound.

They say in heaven you can share  
your passwords. What a relief,  
for you, Karen. Do you still remember  
that night your step-mother came  
to your 15-year-old bed, after the divorce,  
and whispered softly with each kiss and caress,  
"us girls have to stick together?"  
Or doesn't that fit together?  
In the morning you swore never  
to have a C-section,  
having traced her scar.

I'm a complete stranger  
to cancer: my favorite cigarettes  
came and went like advertisements.  
But it meant the same  
to those who paid attention when they cast their lots  
for land, Christ's clothes, Peter's comeuppance, Judas'  
dramatic heritage.  
A man sent to prison forms his own religion,  
but the warden and I are old and incontinent,

hung here as weightless as lucky thieves hoping for a last  
word

and a freak occasion of courtesy that sounds penitent.

See, even crucifixion can be opportune,

if you play your cards like Pascal.

How heavy though, for you, Karen,

to be so young, so wide awake,

and with every status update,

as adamant as a Sadducee.

## Children in the Agora

When I was born, I was sacrificed.

The first organ donor. My  
spleen and liver halved and halved,  
like fish and loaves, and passed  
hand to hand. Thus each succulent

mouth, to each ampersand ear,  
whispered my first spoken words.  
Some lucky few received my  
eyes, or so they say, I haven't

seen them. Villagers thronged  
to behold their vacant wit,  
crying folk-song tears  
for a body they couldn't inhabit.

**David Tuvell** is based in Atlanta, USA. His poems have appeared in various journals such as the *New Orleans Review*, *The Steel Toe Review*, NYU's *Minetta Review*, KSU's *Share*, *Eyedrum Periodically*, and other publications.

He did B.A. in English from Kennesaw State University, and has studied substantially at the University of Florida. Beside poetry, he experience in software engineering, information science, and labor.

---

---

## [Contemporary Literary Review India](#)

The journal that brings articulate writing for articulate readers.

CLRI is published in two editions (1) online quarterly (eISSN 2394-6075) (2) print annually (ISSN 2250-3366). CLRI is one of the leading journals in India and attracts a wide audience each month. CLRI is listed/indexed with many reputed literary directories, repositories, and many universities in India. We promote authors in many ways. We publish, promote and nominate our authors to various literary awards. It is absolutely free to register, submit and get published with CLRI.

[Subscriber to CLRI](#)

[Get your book reviewed by us.](#)

[Donate to Us](#)

---