



POETRY FOUNDATION

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# At the Galleria Shopping Mall - Setting

BY TONY HOAGLAND

Just past the bin of pastel baby socks and underwear, there are some 49-dollar Chinese-made TVs;

one of them singing news about a far-off war, one comparing the breast size of an actress from Hollywood

to the breast size of an actress from Bollywood.

And here is my niece Lucinda, who is nine and a true daughter of Texas, who has developed the flounce of a pedigreed blonde

and declares that her favorite sport is shopping.

Today is the day she embarks upon her journey,

swinging a credit card through the meadows of golden merchandise.

Today is the day she stops looking at faces, and starts assessing the labels of purses;

So let it begin. Let her be dipped in the dazzling bounty and raised and wrung out again and again.

And let us watch.

As the gods in olden stories turned mortals into laurel trees and crows to teach them some kind of lesson,

so we were turned into Americans to learn something about loneliness.

Source: Poetry (July/August 2009).

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## WHAT IS THE LESSON ABOUT LONELINESS?

This poem originally appeared in the July/August 2009 issue of Poetry magazine

POETRY

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THE FACT THAT SUCH DIVERSE ITEMS ARE AVAILABLE UNDER ONE ROOF INDICATES HOW IMPORTANT MATERIAL IS TO AMERICANS.

this seems important, but it is treated the same as this, which is trivial. The lesson for Lucinda: They are equally important.

she has grown up in a world where we care more about trivial Hollywood trash than we do about wars. She is shallow and materialistic.

"harvest" of greed

Trendy fashion becomes more important than people

- materialism: stuff to be bought = water (ordye?)

We are turning the young generation into materialistic, shallow, and ultimately lonely people. The "American way" is self-absorbed. We try to buy our way out of loneliness

"SASSY" WACK

- materialistic? rich?

- pure!

- to?

simile

mall

value

Her transformation? Her "baptism"?