

Quaker Guns

Your handsome workmanlike fourmaster,
out on a reach, no sight of land,
mirrors the adventure tales for children and grownups—oh, isn't the brightwork
bright; oh, the cannon royal, the twenty-four pounders.
It's safe to assume that you have eighty-six guns.

But these aren't worth the powder
it takes to blow them to hell.
Shipmasters long ago thought up this protection:

they're Quaker guns, a creative ruse, the kind you couldn't and wouldn't
shoot: they're flotsam and jetsam, or any old trees, ships' logs.
They're broken masts. They're the Friends of the Friends.
These logs are laid in the loading trays—
you have twelve cannon at most, but they look like an armada.
So privateers mistake the logs for guns, and they scarpa,
intimidated by driftwood posing as ordnance.
No pirate would go anywhere near you.

Dress Pattern with an Interior

I will be assembled out of
noisy ecru tissue paper
printed with navy blue directions.
“Peace has the human dress.”

Baste sensible pellon along upper edge, dummy,
through all thicknesses as shown;
raw edges even, pinking gusset and peplum.

Viyella is pinned to my components.
Topstitching takes place.
Now I am snappy Aunt Sally.

The contours gleam in the princess line, as I live and breathe.
In completion, seams get the Hong Kong finish,
a couture touch, and actually quite easy to do.

My Husband Sat Up

almost bolt upright in bed, not awake,
in the middle of the night
in about 1962, saying something like,
“Carol, Carol, they’ve found the statue.”

“What statue?” I was almost awake. “The statue of Mary.”
“Where?” “Buried underground.”
I wanted to know more. “What is it made of? Marble?”
“It’s made of foam rubber. They’re
filling it with water to see what it weighs.”

I wanted to know more. Mary is hidden in Amaryllis
as Amaryllis is hidden in vermiculite
in a red clay pot, buried.
What weight would you give to this.

After my brother’s wedding in exactly 2000,
our entire family climbed up on the granite plinth
of the bronze statue of William Lloyd Garrison and just sat there
in bright day on Commonwealth Avenue.
My school friend Annie
is descended from Garrison
as mica is hidden in vermiculite.
Garrison famously said, “I will be heard.”
What weight would you give to this.
Do you want to know more.

Where would you dig. What would you find.