

John Poch

Don't Mess

This Texas woman is a threat . . . or fun,
her little t-shirt tempting: COME AND TAKE IT.
The image of a cannon helps to make it,
black star between her breasts, her hair undone.
But is she packing heat, somewhere a gun?
Does she mean to mock you, make you see her naked?
She looks you in the eye and wouldn't fake it.
Her secret weapon isn't set to stun.

The both of you are married, so forsake it —
this independence — pluck out your eye and run,
remember Alamos or wars you've won.
The light that blinds undresses everyone.
Leave Texas lying; one misstep can wake it.
The diamond warns: you better (she can) shake it.

In Corpus Christi

The church has a different take
on the body
than the rest of the world.

And the gulf fixed between
the two is unbreachable,
though we try like lovers.

In the morning the children cry out
in mostly pleasure along
the miles-long beach,

interrupting love and rest.
And the rest is love
and relentless sun.

Beneath this beach umbrella,
in my head I'm making a map
of the month of June.

Kids out of school
and wild, dig the legend,
and X marks the spot.

By three, leisure's lethargy
spills rainbows like bilge water
from an aircraft carrier.

The trudge up to the condo
is a journey to a nap
and strange waking to drinks.

Evening along the pier and
the sun goes down while the moon
comes up. Gold and silver.

Few who built these miles of sea wall
ever measured moonlight.
And few measure it now,

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though I get a little romantic
and also hope for a small hurricane
against the piles of seaweed