

## Lo, the Gods

Clarence Wolfshoal

Apollo Porta-Pottie

Imagine him stuck in there  
on this blistering day—the god  
of Light, Sun, and Poetry—  
composing lyrics under his laurel crown.

All the stench from bowels  
loosened by carnival rides,  
beer inspired pee. What's a god  
to do? Closed up in a confessional  
of waste, he must spout oracles.  
He must think of his twin Artemis  
afield in the wilderness, beloved  
of animals—stern, sweet, chaste sister,  
smelling the river rich leaves of cypress.

Zeus Laundry and Dry Cleaning

Would they name a laundry  
or even a deli Yahweh's Place?  
To this the god has fallen?  
What must such a name connote,  
lightning bolts shivering the grime  
and affrighting the BO? And it's  
probably some Hera doing all the work.  
She scrubs dirty britches on a wash-  
board—rub a dub dub—and presses  
starched collars with a coal-fired iron.

Zeus stays out front, feet  
up on the counter, and waits  
for pretty housewives to drop off a load.

Athena's Escort Service

She has only respectable girls,  
co-eds working for their degrees  
in philosophy and comparative lit.

Oh, those Platonic dialogues.

She just works the phone—  
nowadays e-mail request more  
likely—and keeps the books.

Her owl perches on a bust  
high on the book shelves, keeps  
asking when they're going back  
to Athens, but she seems  
satisfied to sit and knit, chew  
on black olives, and think about  
ancient wars.

Venus Adult Book Store

She is amused by the old bald men.  
They press against the counter, thumb  
through eyefuls of flesh—foreign  
countries they yearn to vacation  
in but don't know how to buy  
a ticket. They take quick peeks  
at her breasts and gap-toothed smile.

Eyes dart sideways if she looks  
up from counting change. But  
mostly she wonders what Mars  
is doing out there in the world.

If he'll ever return to make a home

and lose his anger and the red fire  
in his still fierce young eyes.

### Odin's Optometry

He swivels the keratometer,  
tells you to lean into it, look  
straight ahead to the horizon  
where a green truck fuzzes  
along a bumpy road.  
Flips of stronger lenses makes  
the truck come into focus,  
the road become a superhighway,  
then a rainbow and the truck  
an eight-legged horse  
for a second. He jots down  
numbers and tells you they'll  
be ready next week. He could have  
divined the whole problem—a slight  
astigmatism—with one eye shut,  
but he's part of the economy now.

### Thor Studies Studs

Hired out as a framing carpenter,  
he'd prefer finishing work, but that hammer  
dents the shoe mold. When he tries  
to set the nails for a minimum  
of painter's putty, he drives the punch  
up to the haft. That hammer,  
his only possession; swinging it,  
his only skill. When he tried  
to sell it to a crewmate, the man  
couldn't lift it, wanted his money back.  
Thor had to agree, more possessed by it  
than he was led to believe.