

# IN A SQUARE OF TIME'S SQUARE TIME'S SQUARE

by Mary Jo Bang

Evidence suggests a clock and its fast hand  
is the most fitting tribute for continuity.  
Times Square (light-lit night)  
is the backdrop for our story, just as Eden  
as an orchard is one narrative  
beginning. In that one, the snake  
as a tempter announces time's end.  
The Square sits in a city that is less a set  
idea and more a disdain for sameness.

Time's Square was always changing  
like the square of the *Times*  
she'd put in a bottle and sent out to sea  
the summer she was six and visiting an aunt  
in Redondo Beach. Or was it an uncle  
in Boca Raton? She remembered making  
a drawing where to create the ground  
a canary was undercut by thick fog,  
a perspective which plunged the viewer

seemingly forever. The rich gray,  
its tonal variations, was the environment  
of the ocean outside the back door.  
Of course truth was always one side  
of certainty. She stops and looks up and sees  
the scenic depiction of a drama-charged life  
on the Times Square billboard above,  
where an actress is asking a moment,  
"What are you?" Asking and asking

to the sound of a whistle calling a cab.

About **Mary Jo Bang**

Mary Jo Bang's fifth collection of poems, *Elegy*, was awarded the National Book Critics Circle Award. Her sixth collection, *The Bride of E*, is forthcoming from Graywolf Press this month. She teaches in the writing program at Washington University in St. Louis.

# VJ DAY IN TIMES SQUARE

by Jehanne Dubrow

This is how distances begin—we two,  
who hurry like a pair of travelers through  
our home, each room a city block,  
and often we are miles from talking.  
I could wave at you from a kitchen chair  
as though in a cafeteria. Upstairs  
becomes its own municipality.  
Sometimes there is the cordiality  
of namelessness, the way one passerby  
might intersect then hold another's eye,  
smiling before the traffic light turns green.

But opening an art book, I've seen  
us in that shot by Alfred Eisenstaedt.  
Remember? A sailor holds a nurse, his hat  
askew so that it seems about to fall,  
forever tilting on his head. She's small,  
although her body curves like steel, a bridge  
suspended in that kiss. There's courage  
in collision. Two pedestrians touch,  
embracing in a photograph with such  
quick ease it's hard to know why when we meet  
we're cold as strangers passing on the street.

About **Jehanne Dubrow**

Jehanne Dubrow's work has appeared in *Poetry*, *New England Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *The Hudson Review*. She is the author of a poetry collection, *The Hardship Post* (Three Candles Press, 2009). Two new books are forthcoming within the next year, *From the Fever-World* (Washington Writers Publishing House) and *Stateside* (Northwestern University Press).

# PIPE BIRDS

PIPE BIRDS

by Ben Miller

Sparrows fly in and out a cove atop the corner pole.  
Feather ruffle unscrolled, beaks chirping, stitching. . .

The family stuck like a burr on 43rd and Broadway.  
No home-style fantasy like my restaurant. *Each week*

*an at-risk heritage—Moldavian, Iowan, Senegalese—  
invited to bake and cook in the kitchen of 35 stoves.*

The reality of where a nest can fit, what lineage abide  
without falling apart into old recipes needing saving.

Curl of metal curtains. Hidden weave of twigs, wire.  
Truck traffic—how does it resound in their little hole?

More vibration than noise? A massage or a message?  
Pipe birds exit like bumbling bullets, enter like moles.

About **Ben Miller**

Ben Miller has lived and worked in New York City since 1986, when he arrived from eastern Iowa, where he grew up and attended college. His writing has appeared in many venues, including *Best American Essays*, *The Yale Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Salmagundi*, *Raritan*, *AGNI*, *One Story* and *An Introduction to the Prose Poem* (Firewheel Editions, 2009). He is the recipient of a creative writing fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.

# CHEZ TIMES SQUARE

CHEZ TIMES SQUARE

by Henk Rossouw

Gabbing to you, Times Square, I'm all  
lickerish and dilated again. Today's  
special is: you rain on the tin

poof! You could vanish like vanishing  
cream, but you won't will you won't you.  
No question, I will know your wrinkles,

while my artichoke beats soundly,  
my silverware asleep in my hands. If  
you time a poem in knots I travel at

32. That's how old I'm in dog years. Yo,  
curvy anchor! Let down your windlasso!  
Yep, 32 minus a tooth, which I lost in a fight

with. I've been defending for myself  
for what seems like. Buffet! All you can  
eat, Jimmy, no hors d'oeuvres no mint only

OMENT: I invented it for you.  
As we speak, the present bodes  
well. Your water  
table's pretty high over here.

In the afternoon, in the  
now of sand and distances,  
in a quick tip of the flung—  
I am happy. That's what mouths are for.

About **Henk Rossouw**

Originally from South Africa, Henk Rossouw lives in Amherst, where he's in the MFA Program for Poets and Writers at the University of Massachusetts. His work has appeared in *Tin House*, *The Threepenny Review*, and online in the *Virginia Quarterly Review*.