

# Venetian Blinds: Ghazal-like Noir

*Suzanne Lummis*

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Shadow/light. What part of me is cut off from the other part?  
The silence of 2 a.m.'s not talking. I may have to get tough.

When he touched it to my head it seemed somehow like a toy.  
Later, the cop said, "Yeah, people think that—then they're dead."

Age nine, I watched the lamps of lonely cars on Highway 80  
throw their flinty hunger on my wall. And what came of that? This.

Humphrey Bogart to the mobster pushing through the door:  
"My, my, so many guns around town and so few brains."

Gold wedding band: *For Eve, 1888*. Jump forward 90 years.  
Bye Eve. Some jackass with a gun made me slip it off.

Real Ghazals use rhyme. Real Ghazals tell of great love.  
. . . Give me time, Reader, I'll think of something.

Monsters chased me down the snowbound ski lodge halls.  
I was dreaming then—I didn't look behind me. I'd better now.

How's this: The lovers in *Gun Crazy* broke away in two cars,  
then spun their wheels in U-turns and drove back to each other.

How's this: He was close, coming fast. It was way too late.  
I stood and waited for him as for a late-arriving date.

What wrong turn? What dead-end? What did I lose on the way?  
Was there ever a way? The silence of 3 a.m.'s not talking either.

Trigger, barrel, little chamber—and inside, the bee-shaped bullet  
humming like one of my thoughts that wanted to come home.

This poem won't rhyme, it just steals: liquorish or salt of the *now*,  
dry ice of *then*, *chiaro* and *scuro*. White flame and black ash.

Plot point: woman wakes, sees headlights sweep the wall.  
She'll love this, then: the one cold clean thing that can't lie.

For next time you're mugged, Lummis, get a new line—  
something snappy, more clever than *I don't have time!*

Suzanne Lummis