

January 2003

## Dreaming of the Neighbor's Wife

Frank Matagrano

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate>

---

### Recommended Citation

Matagrano, Frank (2003) "Dreaming of the Neighbor's Wife," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 20.

Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol3/iss1/20>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact [ORB@binghamton.edu](mailto:ORB@binghamton.edu).

Frank Matagrano  
**Dreaming of the Neighbor's Wife**

I am not the only one who does it, but mine begins  
with a green crane on display in the foyer, the two of us speculating  
whether the bird is a three hundred year old heirloom with a history  
of cursed owners, or just the result of slave labor in the burnt umber  
hills of Niujuan, a forgotten hamlet where a plague of rats crawled  
down from the mountains to feed on a potato crop born  
from a late summer blessing of rain; and only mine involves  
a conversation about rough-straw paper, how it was spread  
under dead bodies as an absorbent during Qian Long's reign  
and how the town-home association would throw a fit if we dared  
to husk bamboo with pestle and mortar, the stench from a kiln  
reaching all the way to Jaycee Park; and only mine reckons  
with the threat of voodoo: a bowl of rice and pennies left  
at the back door, cooking oil thrown on the kitchen window,  
a cow's tongue drenched in herb and placed  
on the front steps, my name, among others, pinned to its side.