

POETRY

Pete Mladinic

Against Torture

We should take them
and put them in little black boxes
for a while, each day.

But that's torture. We are a county
against torture.

On a sunny day I was in a little black box.

But you were only there fifteen maybe
twenty minutes.

The number of days per week, the length
of time per day depends on the crime,
the criminal. If the abuser threw a cat into
a tub of scalding water,

we should put that person in a box
so pitch dark they see only what's
in their mind, and barely move
knees and elbows.

That's torture. We do not torture.

But look what they did..

Australia

There was the young Long Island woman,
somewhere close by her brother, her dad,
and we're bunched by the bar, the deck
with the bandstand and line for burgers.
We're at canopy covered bar, sunset at sea
end of cruise booze merry. She's tan, long
wavy hair, aquiline nose. He leans, his kiss
barely touches her mouth. She didn't like it.

Days earlier, smoking deck, I got chummy
with an Australian, the cruise had lots of
Aussies, is that okay, not offensive? She
from Melbourne, an out of a storybook city
on the ocean, had had a daughter, a babe
that died while being babysat, and a pal,
cruising with her, Marlboros on the table.
She took one from the box. So, Your friend..

Didn't ask, Is he married? I was let down
she preferred him over me. You think he's
better looking than me? He's married, I'm
thinking. Then her pal joins us, dark hair,
taller, bigger. I looked and thought the pal
a girl I could kiss. Forget Ms Melbourne.
She preferred My pal, taller than I, my pal
of the I'm on my fifth rum unwanted kiss.

About the Poet

Peter Mladinic's poems have appeared in *Neologism*, *The Mark*, *Bluepepper*, *The BeZine*, *Ariel Chart*, *433* and other online journals. He lives in Hobbs, New Mexico.