

## IN THE CITY OF THE CRUISE SHIP VALOR by Wendy Drexler

**Wendy Drexler's** recent poems have appeared or are forthcoming in Nimrod (2006 Pablo Neruda Poetry Prize semi-finalist), The Comstock Review, Mid-America Poetry Review, Passager, RHINO, HeartLodge, and the anthologies Rough Places Plain: Poems of the Mountains and Blood to Remember: American Poets on the Holocaust.

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### IN THE CITY OF THE CRUISE SHIP VALOR

Forgive me: I am a little god on vacation,  
entitled to gamble five nights  
in the Shogun Casino amid brocade  
samurai and slot machines, the bell-ringing  
bets, the humanly frivolous cries.  
Forgive me for overeating at the midnight  
dessert buffet beneath the tiled wall  
mural of Rosie the Riveter. Forgive me  
for the hours steeping in the whirlpool,  
for my pedicure, my aroma-spa ocean wrap.  
Forgive my indifference to the ones  
who change my linens, scrub my toilet,  
bring me pina coladas while I sun  
beside the pool. Forgive my gold chain  
and my tattoo, my liquor and tanzanite.  
I bought perfume and a leather wallet  
from the poor in every port. I paid  
good money to kiss a dolphin. And if I  
buy the skin of the last blue iguana  
from a boy who follows me from stall  
to stall just like a dog, forgive me.  
If they carve a wooden replica, paint it  
red and blue, name a lounge after it,  
I will come. I will drink rum coolers.  
Am I not from the City of the Ship?  
And when I return to my cabin, will the bath  
towels not be folded into swans on my bed?