

# Elizabeth Romero

## Our Loss is Spare Change's Gain

Elizabeth Romero has been a much loved volunteer with *Real Change* for more than three years. During that time, she has worked the vendor desk, served on the editorial committee, and been a stalwart member of the *Real Change* Board of Directors. Last month, Elizabeth moved to the Boston area, where she now volunteers with the *Spare Change* homeless newspaper. While we're happy for *Spare Change*, we hope she comes back home after they're done borrowing her.

Our readers perhaps know our friend best for her strikingly direct poetry. Elizabeth's greatest quality is her no BS working-class sensibility, which comes through loud and clear in her written work. While we've published a good deal of her verse over the past year or two, there always seems to be more on the way. Elizabeth, we love you. Send poetry.

### Torn Loose

How far is it?  
How are we getting there?  
Who's paying?

It's hard to picture chaos,  
much less talk about it.  
Exhaust pipes, bits of clothing,  
piano keys, door knobs.  
Things torn loose  
from their meaning.

And the sounds!  
screams, chuckles, murmurs.

And the smells. Oh, yes.  
When plumbing escapes.  
When there's no good place  
to cook or to wash.

It's not like television,  
contained in a neat square,  
without odor or tactile qualities,  
the look of expensive furniture,  
the sound of orderly dialogue  
forgotten  
as soon as it's uttered.

### To Martin

When I saw you on film tonight,  
I remembered the dream  
I had when I was mourning you.

You were folding bolts of cloth  
before the Lord.  
Thump, thump, thump.  
You smiled.  
You were clean.  
There was no death wound  
in your neck.  
They did not kill you.

On film tonight,  
I listened to the words  
pour from your mouth  
like the blood of heaven.

### Birth

The next day she got up  
because of a dream.  
All around were green-gold trees,  
the railroad cars were  
loaded with pale lumber in the sun.

Honey and salt,  
money and a notebook.  
The smoke of her cigarette  
curled up like prayers in church,  
the steam from the coffee  
the tick of the clock.

A gray-white pigeon  
propels itself across the sky  
the green leaves flutter  
like composer's hands