

Here's Looking At You: Notes On the *Triptych* of Simon Dinnerstein

Herb Schapiro

What have we here? There . . . ?

Curious—a kind of personal museum?

A still life
with a difference?

Something to look into . . .
Why not?

Come in
Come in from the old familiar streets,
the hills beyond

You may enter
Through those windows in the back
Just like that

Don't fret
You can do it—you have wings
you haven't used yet

(Marc Chagall used his all the time
Your seven-year-old does the same
and there's that other kid
the one who discovered Wonderland)

Just relax
Let your curiosity take you by the hand
or push you around the scene

And you find spread out before you
A grand show—or show-and-tell
So much there to see—
Pictures, tools, the scribbles of kids
Fragments of a world, their world—
the people at the sides

So much seems to tell you different things
and at the same time
play with the little mysteries between

A place of plethora
As the scholars might say
Of other places, other styles
And the sketches of today

Emblems of the past
Mingling with the visions of kids . . .
The past on the wall, collected, remembered,
Catch as catch can
And, arrayed center stage,
the utensils and implements
of actions and concerns
Today

The house furnished with dreams and memories
while the future sits still
 there on the mother's lap

Nothing that unusual
 if you only stop
for a moment to reflect

Time caught in that moment

Something like your mind
which on a good day
 can show you and tell you
All kinds of things
 about all kinds of yesterdays
All kinds of tomorrows too
 And hold it all there
Bring it all home in a minute

Hold still for a moment, you out there—
 See the fullness of life
in the backyard
 of your own imagination, being

See what I show you here
 Something of our world, held still . . .

Meanwhile
This trinity remains there looking at you
perhaps wondering, apprehensive
about the next moment
as you walk about their eminent domain

They have done, they are doing
and await the next move
of their manifest destiny

And you?

Herb Schapiro is a playwright and author. His published work includes the plays *The Me Nobody Knows* (Samuel French, 1970) and *The Love Song of Saul Alinsky* (Samuel French, 2008), and *Elements of Drama: A Study Guide to "Hamlet"* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1989)