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Introduction

Steven Stone

YELLOW/BLUE.

Full throttle yellow
blue note chorus

fall-fiery
pale boned
telephone dreams

wicker baskets of
sometimes gold

grass bottom shoes
for earth angels

the locus of where you
want to be
or be trapped
how high is your fever
how deep your pitch

night favors the
clucking tongue
and wagging eyes
“This ain’t no Waste Land ”

unload the dense
vessel of conversation
with prehistoric repartee;
spiny prattle;
moon’s cathartic grin;

the screaming vessel
docks at midnight

Recall the thousand
angels nodding in
their vapors

May 2016

Mark Young

Seven of Nine

Somehow a mariachi
band in the Botanical
Gardens. Otherwise,
okapi. Rapids redolent
with anger. Polished
wood floors. The roll
of ambivalent dice.

Halieutic

In small-scale societies every-

one carries the same alleles as everyone else.

Many have no eyelids. Those that do are cut

in a corkscrew shape & support the summary exe-

cution of rumored drug traffickers.

null-A

Some adage somewhere about how one should always

know the answer to a question before asking it. Not a good

way to learn. So many better avenues than just listening to echoes.

why did the export stop?

Is
this morning's
king-
fisher

that
pauses &
poses on the
pool fence

between

p
l
u
n
g
e
s

into
the water

also
thinking
of / Charles
Olson?

The Preacher discovers Chinese food

Between the steamed
dim sims with sweet
chili sauce, & the fish

dry-coated with flour
& fried in soy & ginger

Falls the Shadow.

An ingestible origami robot made from pig gut

A conservative threshold value, though generally

considered safe, does have side effects. More fiber

than a bench full of identity deviations means

it often gets a bad rap in terms of market funda-

mentals, even when no bubbles are observed.

Donal Mahoney

At Midnight in New York

**It's midnight in New York
and in this tall building
Herb and Molly are
in bed making love.
Molly is a virgin
and it hurts.
Olga's upstairs
in bed with cancer
terminal and it hurts.
Melvin's downstairs
in bed snoring.
Nothing hurts because
he doesn't know yet
he has multiple sclerosis.
In the hallway a thief
goes floor to floor
trying door knobs
hoping one will open.
All the doors are locked,
chained and bolted.
Everyone is safe.
No one can get in.**

A Sisyphus Moment

**There's a force that makes
a boulder hard to push up a hill.
And there's always a boulder
and always a hill when it comes to
helping the poor find something
to eat, somewhere to live, a job
they can go to every day.**

**Sometimes the boulder slips
and rolls back downhill
and Sisyphus jumps aside.
Accidents happen.**

**But sometimes the one
who owns that hill says no
and blows his trumpet and gives
the boulder a mighty shove
and Sisyphus gets run over.**

**Then the poor must wait
a century longer
for another Sisyphus
to volunteer and get
behind the boulder.**

**No wonder the poor
are getting together
and grumbling louder.
They know Sisyphus isn't
the answer to the problem.
They must push the boulder.**

Radio Flyer

When you were a boy in 1948
living on a block of bungalows
in Chicago right after WWII
you had a red wagon
you pulled behind your mother
going to the grocery store.

Rationing of food was over.
Beef was back and butter too,
no more margarine you had to add
yellow to. Now you had big bags
of groceries to pull all the way home
in your red wagon with your mother
in a house dress swinging her purse
and smiling behind you.

You were the man of the house
on hot summer days and your
red wagon was the family car
because although your father
had a car, an old Plymouth,
he took it to work every day
and didn't get home until
late at night because of
the splendor of overtime.

The only caveat was
your red wagon had to have
Radio Flyer painted on the side
or the other boys would say
you didn't have a real wagon.
The war was over but they said
your family couldn't afford one.
Same thing when you got
your first two-wheel bike.
If it wasn't a Schwinn, they said
your family couldn't afford one.

Not as Bad as Nagasaki

**Old Yoshiko in Tokyo can't sleep
because her husband snores
so she sits in her kimono
and eats a few rice cakes**

**with a few sips of saké.
She thinks about the past
and then calls her daughter
in Chicago to remind her**

**that Truman's bomb killed
almost all of her family.
Come home right away,
her mother tells her**

**as soon as you complete
your degree in chemistry.
Earthquakes and tsunamis
aren't as bad as Nagasaki.**

Priest and Prostitute

**The old priest who won't retire
despite his bishop's hints
rides his bike around the parish
every day for exercise.
He waves and smiles at everyone
and they wave back.**

**But now he'll be in bed
at least three weeks because
he flew over the handlebars
and broke several ribs,
his elbow and his nose.**

**Everyone in the parish now is
praying for the priest except
the prostitute who sees him
riding his bike and waving
when she gets home from work.**

**She saw the ambulance take
the priest away and stopped
that night at the candy store and
sent him a box of fudge.
A nice old priest, she thought.
She doesn't have time to pray.**

Gary Langford

In the world of e.e. cummings

i have degrees of the rise & fall
we take the rise better than the fall
shall I be in the laboratory of typography
in the purity of e

e

Cummings

with a sharp tool u
you sailor of eccentric punct ation
i try not to hold your id

a

s

a

t

i

m

e

o

p

e

n

e

r

good one for a learner says e e
i wear a tie for a family mystery
official ideas can be unofficial ideals
in the land of corporate war
bundles by a grim grammarian
we are held in battle

un

ble to treatise full stops cheer

f

u

l

l

.
this is your column of clothing

ur

bin

dreams

feet of

streets broken

cells cells cells

cell cell oops

e e

birds fly away in tree-time

v

o

i

c

e

s

g

r

o

a

n

trustees of your will

smo

king

lustre grows

lust goes

age argues low

in bro k

en

he

arts

sorry e e ending has a dank

.

In the Verse of Love

Liability is credibility in the language of our courtrooms.
We seek to be a barrister in the disagreements, 'you deserve yours.'
Exclamation marks are the battle. Commas are expectations.
Like principles in our share market, asserting profits will come.
The wind changes for some in the growth of swearing.
Blame is the game. We are dedicated to never being wrong.
Like hits on the charts, decibel by decibel in case of deafness.
The young are disdainful. They ride the wind of change.
I hedge my bets at the market of right and wrong,
like those that need to be immaculate on the lifeline.
'A horror movie is my parents running naked around the house.'
They examine each other as migrants with false passports.
Like we can ride wild horses to a cheering crowd at stadiums.
I come off one as a kid, clothes ripped off to tumultuous applause.
All comes from the wheezing laughter of a hoarse uncle.

● I love you, I love you, even though I've forgotten your name.
Embarrassment sees us put on each other's clothes.
'You're weird,' says a boy at the table. I agree, bra back the front.
Opening up he blinks like a fox as his mother appears in my pants.
'Fitness of limbs and a few other organs,' I tell him.
'With a ram-a-tam,' says my wife to whistle like a pot.
Our son adjusts my bra as a slingshot in a forgiving crowd.
He takes to mathematics as his parents are renewing each other.
Ask 21×21 and he'll say 441 without a breath. We need a calculator.
On this my wife shrugs at geometrics in the birth of logarithms.
Once upon a time he went to bed a boy, woke up as a mathematician.
I have never understood why girls like him as a filtered cloud.
Our boy looks average yet he is able to make bedposts move.
He wins an International Maths Championship and still talks to us.
Q: how numb can you be? A: zilch. Deafness helps parents as well.

Virgin is an airline, along with a crop of bare barley and bovine beads.
We wave our fingers as a wand in the call of the Romantics.
Webs are fine lines, neatly wrapping around us, yet we still breathe.
Voices rise and fall until we are out of breath on the outside track.
I hold you close. You are my dose of sunlight, my love-current.
True in photographs, true in ideograms, true in nudity.
Violins play in the orchestra of shadows. I can't stand the tune.
Mostly because I don't know the composer and you do.
Just as gin is a female understanding of a Scottish accent.
Vision is an ability to pick out moments of the invisible enemy.
The figure that lurks as a curse we unwittingly suffer from.
It's my time in the House of Customs as I try to work out the direction.

Ecstasy has two heads in the same body. One is in a hollow land.
The other is a celebration of stand outs you know won't last.
I pray I will, linking fond memories with a favourite food,
Eating trifle and the peace-de-resistance by the heart full.
Randy and Jewels is today's translation of Romeo and Juliet.
I am the cook at the head of the conquering kitchen army.
Entrée: lust before bedtime, a large or small dish of habits.
Main: marriage Lorraine de hot sauce with friendly fried legs.
Desserts: passion fruit slides down our throats like a smooth liquer.
Endeavours grow in an age of litigation, Sue but a breath away.
You swear – I join you – the modern stomach is a rubbish dump.
Pick up the pieces. A present of value is the stomach pump.
Each duck sound you make encourages my dish of a soul bake.
Small soldiers run along our skin, hundreds of flags on the make.
We are the generals. Our crops are fertile in the love garden.

In the Forgotten Language

Hidden rooms grow earnestly to fall decorously in our garden.
In each one is the lavender language of our flowers.
Soft credence's sound out from a hanging tree to foreigners.
A fall from us is a fall from Grace into a hole.
Down here you reach out blindly on the slope of hope.
Try to smile in the secret sub-garden of small status.
Sweetness unfurls a faint hair to shiver in uncurling.
We all need to learn the difficult language of new flowers.
Large flocks of criticism will fly in the customs of cities.
If hidden as parrots any translation is sharply beaked.

Don't forget that our feet are in the lie of robust shoes.
My ones argue as left and righters. Boy, can they argue.
I'm more tolerant of shoes than I am of a politician's legs.
They can be laced tightly like incumbent generals of the military.
Saluting can be a habit that you return as a mockery.
Love sees you accept a variety as much as the new language.
Boots are mountains whose slopes will always be climbed.
Words have a tapestry of tenderly defined experience.
Shoes of independence have grown larger than retreating feet.
Repairs cross cultures, doubling as leg weapons of the street.

Language clothing rises as animal hair, but without holes of fear.
Sound cuts itself as we do, hanging in clothing galleries.
The younger you are, the less animal hair in fashion care.
You prefer everyone to witness what you believe waits us all.
How we can be forgotten in the surreptitious length of change.
Clothes now grow its own beliefs in restless afternoons.
To comically falter, especially when called up to the altar.
Judiciously misspelt we faithfully return to fashion talk.
Beware. Haunting is on the go, to claim we will balk.
Clothe words over faint baby calls to stand tall but wobbly.

Principals can average the principles in showers of incumbency.
Heads have a faint hesitancy when wind falls elsewhere.
You know not. Nor do knots of electric pulses ever free you.
In the cautions of headland there comes the difficult to understand.
Neurology plays us all up in gust, no hand, no rib, and no rump.
A break has a double meaning. Settlement is a large bonehead.
We gather solidity in all shapes to the heart to not be bled.
In such moments the intensity can fog us in calmly, or be clarity.
Figures of sadness struggle in long healing ceremonies.
Linguistics is so light a pale colour is blind to us all.

We recall what we prayed to go by with a nostalgic sigh.
Artefacts allow us to ride through all sentences.
Spirits are in tiny clouds above a litany of bottles.
I see you. How close do you hold on to yourself?
I know this doesn't startle you in the news tonight.
What does is the idea words can last longer than flesh.
Feet, shoes and clothes are waiting in the lost room.
Each one loads us close. We try not to care but have to.
Shoes disappear. Darkness is called as we are in dreams.
Goodness is determined on all else in a forgotten language.

In the Texture of a Canvass

Lear

Ning

Pain

Ting

On the canvass I design on painters as they did the covers
Of some of my books or the sets of my stage plays and musicals.

The artist's name on the canvass usually needs a translator.

Wep is Wendy Pitt as I went to her first exhibition.

A writer's name is on a book cover as a small finger.

Success is a writer's name as an inner city building.

Size can be a worry cloud, to measure names as a shroud.

LOVE is Am larger PEACH.

Q: how numb are you? A: I am numb, err, one.

Writing a nose is a sausage-lock in a Dali painting.

A nose is a clock with hands as long sausages with eyes.

Memories can be abstract in semi-conscious dreams.

Keep quiet. How often do you feel your mind is a flake?

The greater the jokes, the greater the reign of the flakes.

There is nothing left 9n depression's fall; emptiness rules.

Mo

De

Rn

Ar

T

William Blake's sketches are the eyes to open up his poetry.

I set fire to a school assignment cause he sketched me to.

My story on him is a fantasy, a man called Blake out of prison.

He is invisible to everyone but himself in a small sketch.

He shoots in silence; only nobody falls in the shopping centre.

He is cast as William Tell. Arrows arrive between the eyes.

The apple on his head bounces down to roll over the floor.

E

A

Little

I

N

G

My self-portrait is on my minute canvass like your hand.

Paint is indecisive if I am scowling or smiling at you.

Your skin tells its own story, whether you listen or not.

I have coloured my cells together, surprised leather.

Does this relate to the vulnerability of a fashion parade?

My first wife took out a mortgage on herself as large as a house.

My next wife went into my paintings, nude and sombre.

VG

SS

MD

BA

Acronyms believe their own status. You decide yours.

Top drawer, we rewrite, we repaint ourselves to remove the bite.

Caustic acid hurts the more we say we are learning.

We seize the Sorbonne in the cosmic degree of wood.

Our new painting clothes us up in Baudelaire's hood.

There is fallout of fashion stores on the rustles of feathers.

I shall dig myself deep in the sheets to stand all weather.

In the House of the Injured

There is a house where the door changes from giant to small.
We labour with unease as if we'll get what we don't want.
In this manner we can be casually rubbed out of measurement.
Much depends on the fall and where you step at the lights.
Surgeons wheeze to each other in their own theatres.
A patient who talks is quickly gassed. Words are seagulls.
The clock ticks like a bomb in machinery's pale room.
Heavily drugged, down under has a new meaning of flight.
At night a loud chord wakes us up in a bed of straw.
Meteors can be found in the soft cadence of our eyes.

There is a room where the injured pray for the face of god.
Other buttons are pressed to discover growth of a warm win.
In an echo of time we row through the rapids to applause.
We encircle blocks without once being hit by other hands.
In summer we swim – or run – casually over the earth's skin.
We don't need to be warned of the worry of a black gas.
We put on a uniform in the language of appearances.
A shop in another room has bonescapes in custom furnishings.
Shutters have not yet arrived. We are disdainful on the services.
For a moment, just for a moment, we don't need to decorate.

The house grows apart from initial findings of the exploration.
Bones knot together as childhood waves itself goodbye.
An ability to split your legs in the straight lines of a ballerina.
An emerging from a football ruck as if it's a comedy.
Wobbling has a new meaning of height and high heels.
On an imagined muscular heaven that passes quickly.
Breaks run over us. Sprains are common. Tendons are tender.
We hope to be in comfort clouds that fly over us all.
The higher we go, the thinner our breath in flight's delicacy.
We fall back on ourselves to touch the soft furl of foreheads.

The house is larger than the family tree in its own history.
You are presented as a liturgical document of fading print.
It's a small animal about to be extinct. I hope I'm wrong.
Time can be eccentric with the key to every room, every truth.
We are all weathered on a cellular composition.
I am on the roof with a crow to swing sweetly to you.
As romantic as I am likely to be, you crow without regret.
This is when we stare in the mirror and try not to giggle.
We all have a crow's beak to peck at our injuries.
We all have a need of the recovery seed.

There is a room on the bone market with precocious bone prices.
Legs are foundations. Hips are hallways. Eyes are rated as gold.
Inside organs can be out of tune, playing what we'd rather not hear.
The concert can be gruesome. We surrender easily in hope.
Different ribs are a different architecture. A few are animal food.
This is when we are the injured to understand the feared.
We search for a small window, regardless of the darkness.
Croon until everyone in the house can hear you.
This is the moment the I is ours in the cautionary hall.
Turn the page for a script development of build and balance.

There is a house where atoms tighten together to glide.
Beyond locks to hold us in. Beyond cupboards to hide.
Breakage can be from the chains. Movement is a comedy.
We have our own statue of liberty, our own escapement.
We are greeted warmly in the tai chi of injuries.
The house's renaissance is in the Age of the Body.
Dear Heart, each artery has a new start, a new innocence.
Dear Legs and Liver, you are held as a friend, a giver.
Dear Skeleton, you are clothed in fashion. We hear you well.
I am your man. I am your woman in the house of the injured.

In the Graphics Room

Hair today

gone tomorrow

1009: popular café

To nose nose nose you
is to love love love you

eye eye
n
o
s
e

0 0 eyes of March

You are my spilling mistake

Best sellers have **LARGE NAMES**

FAT
HER's
DAY

over

board

I have academic w b l
b e
s

In
T
Mate

Small myths

Shrinkage

forge t ful

French coup le

p e w o f

p i l l s

de
cul sac



Thomas M. McDade

A Vietnam War Memorial Wall Fantasy

Visitors cry, embrace and pray on both
knees or one, standing too
as if they've just gotten the news.
Notes, photos, poems, art, flowers
real and fake, are placed against
the shiny panels citing the slaughtered.

Staring, stoic souls lacking any fallen
and feeling oddly out of place
adopt a patch
of random warriors.
Mouthing names, they wonder hard
if so-and-so could possibly be

the very same one as they rush
to shelters housing pages sealed
in plastic: names, home states,
wall locales and one might conjure up
a thriller plot featuring phone
books, every last number

no longer in service.
Relieved or rattled they return,
count across, finger the rows
from bottom up nearly tripping
over tots whom they hope never
suffer war's math and alphabet.

A girl perhaps just turned teen
smiles through braces, slowly
slides along, arms outstretched
as if a protestor occupying
a federal building ledge
as her backside skims

the hallowed engravings, despite
stunned faces she carries on.
Is this a symbolic erasure?
An act borrowed from a fiction: say
shrinking and sprouting Rabbit-Hole Alice.
Will this restless kid vary

in height from inches
up to the ten-foot-three Wall height
and back until the grieving
granite is thankfully blank quirky art
fit for preening and bouncing tennis balls.
An incredibly buxom woman, hair band like the mushroom
munching wonderland kid wears,
sports a T-shirt that brags,
GOOD THINGS COME IN PAIRS –
no doubt she'd welcome a fantasy census
enhancement come true, 58,000 and more
she'd boast she'd be ably up to suckling.

Hard-Boiled Eggs

They'll keep your marbles rowed
Sync, style and stir your heart
Your sense of humor will soar
A chic cashmere beret a halo
Bravos and deafening applause
Will trail not only your poetry
But your have-a-nice-days
Neighbors will leave six-packs
And fresh fat mocha éclairs
At your door and in your car
College girls will memorize
Collar, inseam, shoulder, waist
Rob boyfriends' fancy duds
Pay to have tailored what's off
Beg to share wall, floor or bed
Hollywood stars will flub lines
Athletes will go butterfingers
Merely sensing that you exist
If you ever die, rare silver
Coins will grace your eyes
But the odds are slender as
Men rated high on violence
That resolved to crown crime
Their straight and narrow
Will knuckle, shoot and slice
Gag the poached and shirred
Just to be your bodyguards

Advice

Lonely as the last railroad
spike in gravel,
relic of brakeman error.
A billboard advising
BUCKLE UP –
COMMON SENSE
FOR ALL –
A rusty trestle,
and a single birch
so slim one could ring
a thumb and index
finger around,
Scarred and pecked
fit for a kid's bark
model canoe project.
Good posture though
too sparsely branched
for snow to buckle
but molting
like a strange child's
bedroom wallpaper
slithered and curling
its various vipers
from edges.
Dalmatians poorly heeling
for the sensitive type.
Pure camouflage
sitting ducks for lightning
Think painter rags,
mildewed
wedding gowns,
mold mottled licorice
dingy nurse
and chef outfits.
Velocity joins light to refine
or silhouette along with mutual
perusing — a footnote advises
SPEED LIMIT
ENFORCED BY
AIRCRAFT.

Pistols and Paces

I found my second master
hand-walker, Val Veen,
in Nabokov's novel, *Ada*.
The first during pickled eggs
and potato chips, washed
down with screwdrivers
at the Bishop Bend Club.
The bartender broke stale
morning silence with a tale
of payday dye house drinkers
betting on a man successfully strolling
the length of the bar on his hands.
When he named the acrobat I did not
acknowledge that performer
was my Uncle Jim or that his
acrobatic skill was not a family trait.
I *have* mastered standing
on my head trying to please
some folks not worth a bent elbow—
a talent no fool would wager on
and surely not fit for narration
no matter how maddening a quiet.
Val Veen worried about losing
his upside down talent after suffering
a wound in a duel.
This fact best kept to oneself
along with knowledge of Val
and author, in your average
morning drinking barroom,
not that owning up
would result in pistols
and paces, more likely
an embarrassing fat lip
I suppose, but I'd lay odds
my Uncle Jim would not fail
to buy the uppity S.O.B.
a shot of vodka,
nephew or not.

From Bottom Down

Scuffed and cobbled
Tossed families,
Friends, acquaintances
And enemies worn thin
Their memories
Of us erased, expired
Or merely flapping,
Eyelet pallbearers
Splayed aglet obituaries
But the deceased do
Trod on, in *our* notions
Dreams and fancies
Sized up narrow, wide
Or orthopedic, black
White, brown, canvas
Name the dye
Sandaled according
To cortex footfalls
Lace, Velcro, slip on
Sure as stepping
On gum or scat
Comes a time
When bending
To brush or brightly
Shine is intolerable—
Pitiful reminders
Of the panoramas
Of those stepped
Kicked, tramped upon
Like roaches or ants
Until poof or pop
A heel Rubber
Or leather
High or low tossed
Into dementia
Or Alzheimer's
Shredder
Tongues bound
Too tight
Hazy parades
Of dollar store
Flip-flops toppling
Arches

Postcard Shy

My aunt gave me holy hell
for not writing a postcard home.
They embarrassed me hinting
they knew I was the one pissed
on the outhouse seat.
There were odd glances
as I revealed there were no dress
clothes for church in my brittle
cardboard Coast Guard suitcase
my father borrowed
from a bartender pal.
They couldn't fathom my hate
of fried eggs crusted brown
on the edges like plastic
or my flubs playing cards
according to Hoyle
and not my housing
project rules or my snubbing
their stupid rainy day talent show.
When my attempt at an Olympic
dive off the pier ended
in a belly flop I recall
"it figures" in my uncle's eyes.
There was a great speedboat ride
and I caught a foot long yellow perch.
I skippered a canoe alone
and didn't care that it was
connected to a pole on shore
by a long rope that twanged
"We don't trust you"
as it whiplashed me out
of an escape daydream.
Memories of that first and only
vacation of my youth followed me
through my Navy years.
I flooded my folks with postcards
and stormy times at sea, I often wished
my ship were leashed to a pier.

johannes s. h. bjerg

3 hybrid haiku sequences:

Orthoorama

59 solar eclipses tall
the permafrostbear growls down
a stone face

one bridge after the other never to turn on the turmeric finger

still recovering from birth
I live
under my hair

turn to swallows to snow to salt out where the ocean's lost

slowly outgrowing
the state of perpetual
innocence

looking back until the white in your eyes becomes space

talking to clouds
she brings just one
mercury pill

deep inside its head the whale grows a tree

knead light into a bowl
and then ... the melatonin-angel
scatters

by the far end of your gaze neurons become deserts

....

Mothology

- or Dr. Magnificus Schuster's Orchestral Rehearsal at the Morgue

moth driven
the glacier stops
by the Sunday china

not many can do that blow and suck in light through a trumpet

half her hip is a galaxy
leather fingers count all the 1's
in an eel

a faint flicker in the non-person and revolution eats itself

Schuster's Asylum
each child's head filled with soil
and dolphins

until Time gets here let's build cones of sand

indivisible
the snap of the fingers
round midnight

the largest ear in orbit zooms in on questions about horses

a noise in the next room
Schuster conducts an orchestra
of radium beetles

it's a story in which you put needles into smokedolls

she gets away
the girl with a copper beech
growing inside her

to start a hill first dig a hole in another place

....

Blues Man Ogre Hands Jr.'s Long Afternoon

paralysing heat
fingers merge with the neck
of a guitar

if I had it from the start I wouldn't know what it's like to not have it

selling his shoes to the devil
the devil now
walks

for the magic hairs on peach skin a 3 chord waltz

a tower of mosquitoes
and on the last one
we build a church

off in the distance a rumbling like the ultimate chord

trusting the creek
we believe in the man
who once stood still

when the chorus comes round again flay the goat

with trees attached to it
a holy place
becomes a phone book

that's the cure for rot turning the guitar upside down

on a nail in his third eye
the crow
he once was

come time come rain the bottle fills the bottle

in Area 51
the birth of
Almond Shaped Eye Blues

they all agree "it's like he wasn't even there"

by bridges
at crossroads and stations
Jr. leaves his signed hats

"Hark, ye angels, hookers and creeps Ogre Hands' Eternal Blues!"

Al Rocheleau

GOOSEBERRY ISLAND

I.

Above the Cape, one broad scythe
of sand sweeps the Atlantic
and commerces with stray humans on its strand
from Andy's Shack to the Head of Westport
north of Horseneck, past pink shanties
and across a little quahog bay, landing
by a borrowed skiff and up three quays
to the Town Beach that trapped me
in October dark with my thirty-four
year-old employer, tossed
from her tenement by a husband who drank—
casting Lana Turner
to the nets of my seventeen sympathies,
turning me abob on buoys
of opportunity, rash
as sin that can age the young
(like spars of Bedford ash)
and quicken in the mist, soon moonless
in dunes of panic, clambering back to parking's lot
and light where I could
have, or not, among caress
and open kisses, that slip
into the shell of her as some invading
mollusk might, without a man's regard
for such significance as this.

II.

And I stood at shambled
shoals of glacier rock and calcium sand
separated from the diffidence
of mainland by an after-thought
causeway— Gooseberry Island,
a scab of brambles
bitter bitten of its pointillized fruit
and with one good stretch
of leeward beach
beyond the towered Nike missile site—
the Tarot tower, overgrown and strewn
with the halos of old rubbers, their
guts dried in stains like men-o-war
off waves of illicit wanting
decade after decade, displaced commas,
semi-colons in the
preponderant sentences of lives, an island
where I met in afternoon kismet
of the next July
her husband and their daughter
mid the wading children
of some Portuguese wives,
and I tried to be polite—
the girl was fourteen and fully
bloomed as an Italian starlet
might etch her curves upon the air
and carve into the sheen of her pink
swimsuit; I stumbled to small-talk, walking
the discarded glass of old suspicion
and my new guilt, tying themselves
to me like an endowment, pulling
rotten chains of seaweed in and back
from a salty shore and learning
how to ask, and not receive
from the cold, green quilt
an absolution for this world
without absolutes,
so filled with yearning.

GALATIANS TWO

Said somebody's Lord:

we are present among our sins,
guest of the dinner.

Nude maids dance
with castanets, the wine blurs,
the boar is cut.

So begins the pain.

Thou shall not covet—
it clings to the cells, taints
their cleave to a malformed destiny.
Pride nitres the nourishing halls
into blackness; gluttony
pools a Leviathan
in the gut. The slothing gait,
halved with each step
betrays any destination but a fall
(where the mouth of greed
yawns wide its aching, dry).

Anger surges along miles
of wire, doubling distance
to a static hum. Envy
penetrates in pinpoints,
then severs its serrated self.
No wonder the mind fails,
forgets, hallucinates truth
in pastels of blindness.
The heart hardens to a basaltic fist,
presses knotted breath.

The vanity is our smile, our blank faith.
And the slowness of its happening—

it creates new flesh.

Deep inside, the man elects
to grow another man, wildly rebellious;
this is cancer, *this man*.
We leave quickly enough,
sedated or screaming, bury it
before it grows limbs, and walks
as us, because it can.
If we stayed, all of us,
we would see the monsters,
marvel at them.

They would inherit the earth.

Fortunate or not
we die for our sins,
forgetting the crosses and covenants,
the cleansing in and out, our versions

of Him.

LES QUÉBÉCOIS À LA CABANE À SUCRE

(Quebequers at the Sugar Shack)

In February
north of Montreal
at confluence of three rivers
(where Cartier had smoked his pipe
among Hurons and *voyageurs*
that smelled of otter), the trees
bleed their centuries sweet.

Caught in drab, hung buckets
neath the wound of each confecting maple
drips hold true to the patience
of elders, to the half-full
impiousness of youth.

We boil and boil to a sticky thinness
between *quadrilles*, like prelude
to the conjugal of French and Indian gods,
the pacts of which are found
in naive bumps
on all our noses.

We celebrate a fetal Spring
kicking
in the womb of our laughter
at long tables, the disappearance of crepes,
the beer on beer to a pinnacle
of brown glass stacked to the cornices
of afternoon, because men are this way,
and women understand.

Outside a trough
of new snow catches the red-hot *tire*
that drops and hardens into twisted candy
on flatwood sticks.
Children lick and chew beneath
their bright red *toques* as spectres
of the nascent Huron did,
passing one to Cartier,
predicting this.

WATUPPA POND; THE ICE HOUSE

I am not a Wampanoag;
in fact, they are all gone,
come as whisper, outlines in the oaks,
legend distilled to street signs
in an old town.

But I as they, having latticed the broad water
with formations of celebrant canoes,
cross seasons to when blue turned white
their own potential and my dreams.

On the eastern shore, what they call Copicut,
trees that had descended from the sponging
of a glacial age left its cold, transparent gold
each winter. The industrious Yankee and Canuck
gravitated to its promise,
hailed the fieldstone and mortar
to a cleared notch,
and raised the monument.

A Copicut castle, both edifice
and device, stored its cache in solitude,
block on block cut from the lake
as it stalled to a frozen stupor,
each ton stacked and weighed on stone sleepers
separated by clean straw,
added from subtraction every
chill January through March,
keeping meat good for the well-to-do
of Bristol County;
skaters and sleigh-parties
cut their figures, jingling at the Bedford lip
while Irish pick-axed
the opposite rim, filling the cold
thick masonry
to its four mortised brims.

New ice could even last three years
within.

Today, the tired fortress and
machine, obsolete as an Indian
is reclaimed by boughs of huge oak,
maple, birch, swallowing its ruin.

Nothing is preserved.
The seasons pass;
and in spring winds

Watuppa waves.

THIS THIRST

There was the time
we skipped to Tansey School
to listen to a symphony
of oboes, violas, bassoons
and walked back parched,
and I, a droughted reed
stumbled to the fountain
penitent before a water-god, entranced
by the cross-eyed gush
of what we called, in New England
the bubbler.

Or at North Park
where we baked among crowds
like tarts on the concrete bleachers
of August, and with all I could afford—
two quarters out of the lining, bit
into the cold core of a softy-cone
trying to conquer it.

One time I blew
a high school tennis match
for the gulp of stinging foam
and knew I would always
fold under just the right torture.

Now, this thirst.
Tantalus was a Greek;
I am French, but in the dead ghost
of a salt sea, of this our misadventure
I might as well be dust itself,
waiting to smoke with the first hit
of a raindrop

that never comes.

Steven F. Klepetar

I Remember Nothing

Neither owl's injured
cry nor the crumbling

picnic shared by friends
lost and wailing in the night.

You say you remember
faces in the dark, old smiles

painted onto wooden
lips, a rash of eyes, a

shivery touch of papery
hands. You recall

figures hunched and
shrunk near vision's edge.

Together we almost
tap the bottom of an old

song, hollow baseline
or hint of lyric in some

silver-threaded tune.
When morning spills

gentle mist across my
bedroom floor, I remember

nothing –
or maybe cats

screeching at our fence,
and bullfrogs in the green reeds.

The House You Can Never Leave

This is the house they said
you could never leave,
locked and braced with poles.

Here you would learn
the heat of a dry summer,
cold of a winter buried in snow.

Rabbits and squirrels leave
their tracks, and trees
stretch empty branches toward

a frigid sky weighted with cloud.
You grow thinner,
teeth sharp against old bones.

Through a landscape of drifts
women struggle, bearing
porridge and rice. Men find you

a perfect stone. This you polish
until a face can emerge,
wild and alone as a one-eyed god.

A Dream of Dogs

I dream of dogs with bared teeth
prowling in streetlights, yellow
mongrels crouched behind wire.
Overhead floats that cloudy wafer,
the moon. I lay it on my tongue,
taste its flavor – dusty, potent,
sweet. Our house shivers
with ghosts. They rise from our
coffee, before sleep-caked eyes,
then drain back, useless into earth.

Awake, we watch as the river
struggles downstream, ice-choked.
Over and over we sing our names,
murmur and merge with sky
and wind until we return emptied
of words. We try to enter the bodies
of crows, those bundles of feather
and soul. We have left our hunger
behind, outside where our dog
tongues lap and burn. Every night
we vanish, slippery as the setting sun.

Stopping The Clock

Time, that phantom
rushing by, that nothing
made of distance and speed –

invisible time on a spiral
dial, circling, clumping gasses
into galaxies, slowing at the edge

of great gravity wells, eating
mountains, carving canyons
in the flesh of earth. You make

a "T" of fingers and palm, stop
the clock, freeze the game, but
outside its borders you still grow

old, your gray hair thinner
than one section of a child's.
Once, summers stretched like lazy

beaches baking in a coral sun,
but now they flit and blaze, match
heads igniting one by one, burning

down to your fingertips. Slowly,
slowly your features collapse,
your face in the dark mirror a cloud

of gashes and wrinkled skin. Time
flows backward in your memory's tide,
dragging you in the wake of its undertow.

Nothing But the Breath of Dogs

Some afternoons my friend walks down
to the lakeshore to watch gray shadows
lengthen across cold water brown as tea.
When he spreads his hands, light glistens
in a flattened arc. I'm afraid I've forgotten
his name, though I recall the way his face
burns through stony air.

He sometimes calls me "Padre,"
though I preach nothing but the breath
of dogs. I bring him pebbles
and cheese and beer. He lights a fire,
waits for raven girl to sweep
from cottonwoods, black hair held
by a silver band.

As sun ignites the lake into riotous gold,
a fever seizes boulders, cattails, moss.
Figures embrace and melt: two rivers,
a boiling swirl spilling into channels of desire.

Ken Allan Dronsfield

Feather

Pristine morning
awakening sunshine
soft, gentle winds blow
as butterflies dance.

Marshmallow cloudy
shadows drifting as
chirping birds sing
sweetest sonnets.

A lonely feather glides
guided by the breezes
to rest upon the ground
at my dew whetted feet.

Sunday morning smiles;
radiant on a gold throne
covet all within her gaze
the lonely hawk circles.

Strawberry Daiquiri & Silk Roses

motionlessly awake, helpless and heated
desperate for breezes of a coolish content
fans moving air, like that of a hot hair dryer
lazily sit by the pool, watch silk roses frown
ice in the freezer, fruit juice from the frig
rum in the cupboard, blender waits nearby
fresh sliced strawberries in a bowl now rest
sweat on the brow, the mixing time is now
tall glass from the hutch, granny's best crystal
the noisy whirring is done, a stroke of mastery
walking back to the pool with a sheepish smile
drink my strawberry daiquiri, as silk roses grin.

Adieu

Raindrops of falling magic
spatter upon a metal roof
melodious sleeping tunes
warm tea welcomes tired lips
fluffy pillow and comforter await
carry me to a restful fantasy
pup is fed and candles smolder
slide into dreams, cat at my feet.
To sleep, to sleep; the moon yawns.
the stars softly whisper adieu, adieu.

Lipshitz and Onion Breath

Walking backstreets on a Moscow night
searching bins for scraps of potatoes
both sun and twilight long since gone
the stew's on the boil, moon shadowed
mutton and onion added just in time,
a bit of parsley and clove from the walk
Moscow police stop by and ask my name
replying, "if you're Lipshitz, then my ass talks."

Falling upon the dirt; we laughed for a time,
he pulls out the vodka, bread and soup's on
as we quickly ate, on that quiet city night
struggles I knew were erased through faith.

Night after night, I watched for the cop but
never saw him again in my underground life
he echos our hopes and dreams for a future
and to see him again would be so grand.

Of Sky and Blood, Revision 2
(Ode to King Richard III)

Temperance of valor,
greet me with shame
steal away with a sword
from my leather baldric.
Grant me a final wish
before ending my life,
place me upon a throne
with defiant sufferance.
Whilst falling in battle
on a muddy bloody field;
although devout of faith,
whom shall pray for me?
Will your great God above
grant forgiveness for my
sinful murderous contempt?
I am a warrior, not a priest,
tiller of soil; nor a follower
guided along pious paths.
Forget not that haunted
shrill of the battlefield cries.
Proclaim your righteous
virtue, sing your victory
songs as sky and blood
drain from my pallid eyes.
As the sounds are muffled
and indistinct, I am suddenly
renewed, feeling a rebirth,
if only in an eternal dream.

Kelli Simpson

Writer

(I'm not)

deep / slick
philosophical black
on black wet city street
light broken
open mic check one two
purple bled blue

read

Here Lies Island

It's bigger than I remember, this black boned monster rising
from the scorched earth, soft tissue sea of me.
But the same old sign is there caught in mid swing -
reptilian writ -

Here Lies My Shit.

Where dreams rise up to greet me -
bile from the belly of regret.
A fly bloat buzz of memory -
winds thick with sins I can't let rest.

It's miles off the me I let people know;
this island helladise that grows and grows.
Find it in the dark where the map is ripped,
and the shadow's split -

Here Lies My Shit.

Berry the Mouth

Berry the mouth and thorn the finger.
Wash in the creek and hightail home.
Offer yourself to the porch light and Mama.
Thank God Daddy's still gone.

KJ Hannah Greenberg

No Sailing of Balloons to Mars

Occasionally, epitaphs get earmarked for unexceptional benefits.
Next, Glynises, Jimbobs, Talrtons feel queasy or otherwise twitchy.
See, alternating among exquisite creatures' simple gaping mouths,
Makes naught, no mixed metaphors, no sailing of balloons to Mars.

Given that our society relies solely on foundational human gestalt,
We cull multiple kinds of unwanted bravado, aggression, anxiety.
Spelling and grammar checkers, meanwhile, unlike dictionaries,
Remain terrible for constructing profound records, charting stars.

Sure, it's possible to become attached to tired vignettes, narratives.
Wordiness' no problem if functional writing can't reach audiences.
Layout needs no extraneous material sources. Intestinal bleeding
Notwithstanding, patchwork literature's still morality problematic.

The Internet, inspected, remains crummy for research; pure twaddle,
Creates headaches when effusing literary elements. Good style books
Aside, raw, perennial wonkiness can't be weighed against compound
Nuanced phrases, elephant ears, gin, the splendor of a Flander's rose.

Writers' errors grow if reformulated. Ultimately, *coryphées hobble*.
Consider, proofing never bettered British commas, helped hyphens.
American endings that drop the "-er" when redacting confuse most
Wise persons. No one swears there exists any error-free documents.

Of That Particular Ilk

Anxiety-strung or not, packrats,
Forebearers, of that particular ilk,
Ran from exposure when straddling
Views hardened by porn.

Otherwise wonderful friends, those tools,
Enamored with political rhetoric,
Objectified fiduciary well-being,
As well as Amazon.com's pet notions.

Certainly that sailboat of himself, cartwheeled
Along his tongue, his clothing worn to fibers.
Sushi, even avocado-sourced, needs polished rice,
Maybe, circulating money, a lead in races.

During a break while she dallied, assigned other
Patients, stopped fleeing, observed participants,
Continued to turn in words, thoughts, dead pigeons,
Likewise, she invested in anacondas, escaped artists.

Doctor to pharmacist, the pair claimed two
Relationships feel better than ludicrous weight.
They'd no appreciation for hotel lobbies, pit
Bull pens, park bathrooms, public parks.

In the guise of many codfish, sweet, special spheres,
Their allocation of ambuyat dishes proceeded until
Government employees, also lawyers, ceased
Attacking from fresh angles or sending marmots.

Other followers, in turn, trying coercions of sorts,
Sounding off. Never again, that girl allowed love,
For things pertaining to "character development,"
The heights, which she lived, or consecrated domains.

A Prickle of Hedgehogs Used Part of a Nose Cone

One winter, a prickle of hedgehogs used part of a nose cone for a hibernaculum.
Overwhelmed by human traffic, they activated all of their lawyer's injunctions.

Those spiny visitors chose to remain near the public libraries, where editors,
Mistaken for fiends (with similar surnames) ghosted many peculiar novels.

No one cares about critters' imperfections; only writers get puffed since
Industry "experts" denounce their folios of delightful, whimsical prose.

As for the rocket, folks hired to build it for the Girl Scouts sought
The wee critters' opinion, their knack for mischiefs, notwithstanding.

As the word player kept conjugating Latin verbs, continued wonky output,
Local barbed beasts glided to Mars, fueling themselves with big gumdrops.

Post Scriptum

Michael Marrotti

"Severed"

This
tattered life
is on it's
last wheel
held together
by a string
Pulled to
the left
dragging
me down
jerked to
the right
helping
me up
My own
indecision is
an optional
illusion
One foot
in the gutter
pissing out
dirty urine
disqualified
for bypassing
the encumbrance
of living
Drifting into
the darkness
of the black
market
liberation
One dose
at a time
hanging on
like a leech

sucking the
blood out
of this
sustenance
until I drift
into madness
The
departure
of the string



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