aredwheelbarrow

Dedicated to the passing of ghosts

Interlochen Arts Academy
Interlochen, Michigan 49643

October 1987
"I worry about whether or not a thing is poetic, rather than whether or not it is truthful. I have even come to believe that poetry is the only truth."

-Jennifer Storch-
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If Poems Were Food...I Would Starve

I need right now to write a poem about the joy of putting on an old school sweatshirt to play football in the orange autumn air, but it's already been done, and I wouldn't want to bore you.

I am always last, except to meals. I like to walk behind and listen to the sound voices make suspended in the air like echoes of unformed memories. There was a time when we didn't know that running too fast or walking too slow would break our hearts.

Last night I thought about the choice between immortality and art and ignored the possibility of having neither.

Go on without me; there is something dying here under the papery leaves.

- Tristan Rehner-
One night Mr. Wallpole finally came up our driveway, pitchfork in one hand, shotgun in the other, "get rid of your God Damned dog."
Father stepped outside and the grey men, a century between them, raised fists.
Dad drove him away, his chest pounding for the first time in years, and in confused desperation, physically sickened by his neighbors, doubtful that we could ever sell the house and move to a place where Sam could be free, gave Sam a deer-sized dose of Valium and drove him into the woods and left him there. We never speak of this in my house. Never.

Two days later the poodle ran in front of a truck when I was at the mailbox and died in my arms, slowly, becoming less and less of a dog until he was no more of a dog than I was.

-John Duncan-
Dogs

I fell in love with a girl because she said her name was Sam.
We made english muffins;
I begged - is there anything you want me to do?
She answered let me use the knife before you stick it in the jelly. I howled.

All that night I thought of Sam,
of a black laborador named Sam who had barked with the voice of the hidden dog inside of me,
of the Wallpole family across the street who had thrown rocks at the puppy Sam.

Sam had learned from me and my brother to hate the pompous neighborhood and to voice the disgust that boiled mute within us.
We developed a reputation - the mean dog on the block.
The long summer that my parents were separated, Sam and I frolicked and embraced in the fenceless front yard, ran together barking at the Wallpoles whenever they emerged from the swamp, chasing them all the way into their kitchen.
My sister visiting home from Vanderbilt was annoyed at the new menace, annoyed at how we disregarded the letters from the Wallpole's lawyer that arrived more and more regularly.

In the fall we took on another dog, a poodle.
Sam saved him from careless dashes into the road and nominated himself patient teacher.
But twice in January we found Sam beside other roads, stripped of his tags, drugged, the second time with the scar from a baseball bat on his head.
she thought she was the only one who noticed Mrs. Chestnutt's striking resemblance to an insect. "I bet if we got up right now and left, she would never know," he says again. She feels fingers on her neck, under her hair. "Yes, I'm talking to you. Want to do it? A little rebellion would be good for you."

She gets the feeling he is making fun of her, but she can't quite tell. "Come on; all we have to do is stand up and slip out the back." She flips her hair and slowly turns around. She is afraid to look at him, and she knows that he can feel it. "I'll count to three and then we'll get up. One, two,..."

"Shut-up," Suzie says much louder than she intended. The few people who are awake turn around quickly, but Mrs. Chestnutt continues "And idomatic Latin is one of the most interesting subjects I have personally encountered..."

-Kata Chillag-

Fool's Thought

Lying face up
in the sand.
Waves crash against
the rocks
spilling their essence
across my skin.
Each wave speaks
a childhood
I once longed to
be rid of.
Each wave curses me
and
my desire to
return.

Birds glide,
with the grace
of the wind,
over my now
sunburned face.
Their breasts taunt
me
with a freedom
I have not
seen.
They do not know of,
nor do they
care of,
the bounds that
I know.
Thousands of grains
of sand
part their ways
for me
with indifference.
They lose no
home nor family
by me.
The wind flies
across my
face
with an ease I
cannot
grasp.
His life is destined
by nothing
but himself.

-Suzie draws little clocks on her paper. They vary in
style, plain clocks with bold numbers, digital clock radios,
elaborately carved grandfather clocks, but they are all set
to the same time. "Tempus Fugit," if only that were true,
it would be the most valuable thing she had learned in this
class. She closes her eyes and by sheer force of will tries
to move the time to three fifteen. "Oh, femina, servae tuae
sunt parvae, servae meae sunt magnae. Oh, woman, my slaves
are large, your slaves are small. In ancient Rome, the size
of one's slaves was source of great pride...," the insect
woman drones on. She leans over her book, shoulders humped,
eyes bulging under her thick glasses. She is barely darker
than the white walls of the classroom. Suzie imagines her in
a vault, deep underground, studying the ancient manuscripts.
"Remember," says Mrs. Chestnutt, "don't call it a dead
language, call it a classical language. Latin is the language
of God. And for all we know, there could be some remote tribe
still speaking it somewhere."

"So why don't you just go join it?" whispers a voice
behind Suzie. There isn't a window in the room, just an opaque
skylight caked with dirt. Suzie feels her chest will cave in
if she doesn't get out of the room. She looks down and notices
that she has torn up five sheets of notebook paper without even
realizing it. She flicks the paper into the curly hair of the
girl in front of her. The voice behind her speaks again.
"You don't want to be here, I don't want to be here. Look at
these people. This is the most pointless thing I have ever
learned in my life." Suzie isn't sure if the voice is directed
to her. It isn't someone she knows; it is a deep voice- a
little southern and slow in the vowels.

"It must be a transfer student," she thinks.

"You know, I bet if we got up right now and left, old
bughead wouldn't even notice," he says. Suzie is surprised;
The Time Of Motion

The first thing people notice about you is your eyes, Liquid green. They are always there, Never lost in abstraction, always focused Tightly. They never miss taking everything in. Those eyes would exhaust most people. They drew me into the green, the quiet places Until one day I knew I was fading They had absorbed me and were stretching past letting everything fall in. Suddenly I was nothing, a mark on a wall A scratch along the surface. Living in a place without name or end. Leaving me trying so hard to forgive The scope of your eyes To which nothing can matter more than another. It is your talent, your call. Judgements are still, it is in the motion, the knowing That the beauty lies. I know this is my way of paying As I drown in your liquid green eyes.

-Justin Peacock-

Why I Fear Men In Dark Glasses
(for Luke Karamozov)

Luke, you have been coming to me for years; each time a woman disappears then reappears in a trunk or the woods, killed neatly and without remorse. You have never liked to hurt people, feeling guilt only because of the families. Somewhere in me that makes sense. Your brother was not so considerate; raping that woman in the Safeway parking lot. They found her baby covered in blood the next morning, wandering in circles, pulling at her body. Your brother still denies this and the other women who died in the shadow of his violence. Denial was never a part of you, and the honesty with which you confessed shocked everyone. Now you say you can control your rage and fear. Your eyes can't lie, so you have covered them. If I saw you now, my reflection would be the same as in any dark glasses, distorted. Take them off, and you are the angry, naked prisoner you were in Marquette, before your hair grew long, and you learned this control. It's this passion I could have loved, my own reflection that I fear. For that truth, I would have tried to free you.

-Dawn Patch-
Taking It In

Finally, I have found some place to sit. Beside some lake. Beside some different language of the water. And if it wasn't for this beach, I would've been swallowed by the waves by now. I am cold with this sureness. I am frigid with some other sort of indifference, because something is here, and something is not. I want to put my hands into the water, and pull it towards me. Like something I have wanted to do for years. And because I am speaking to myself, I think I am speaking to nothing, and then everything at once. The lucid air chills me, goosebumps rise. Tiny mountains on my skin. Then as if to gather warmth, my hand travels up and down my leg, and I wish it were the pulling of a wave instead. Take it in slow, and pull it back. My fingers clench at my knee, and I know that it is only me, that I am tugging, that I am just getting to know again. And because the waves are getting nearer, I also know that I am only with myself. And the light around me is just light. And the rocks sliding underwater, are just rocks. Water is only an element.

-Mariana Hellmund-
sick. Instead, for the first time in my young life, I didn't speak. I ran back to the sprinklers to play with my brother, avoiding my great-grandfather for days.

He died within the next week, peacefully. I never cried for him, I was too young to understand death. I wasn't too young to see the love he gave me for the first time, the only time.

-Leslie Kleinberg-

1) The cruelty is the substance hidden deep below the level of thought. Cultivate the reasoning, hide from the abstainment, never a nectar without savage consistency.

2) The reason why I tell you this is that you are and can be wrong. Wrong as the night that never knocks twice. Foolish as the day with its sacred sense of optics, Twice mistaken, mums grow in silent mementos when the quiet gets too loud.

You may tell me not to wander but I can still keep my face in the wind.

3) Blindness, Suffocated savior of Momentary wisdom. Three times sight is fright and other reason to fear. The square of sound is a completeness of everywhere, a euphoria of warmth for faces that follow none but the cascade of precise presence. to hide from more than mountain is to carve a grave from the plaster of dreams.

4) The tone is death. The reason a covered whimper, through the deep congestion of the night, a heart refrigerated its sadness and the proximity was not the enough that some would ask for. These are the reasons for the silhouette. Life is its reason for asking.
5) I think that it is wrong.
I know that these things lack the real
tears, insanity of guilt.
I did what you want and you demand a
respect that can only be thought of in Biblical terms.

Stay away said in syllables, the only requirement is that
you remain close and that these moments appeal to more than
reason and logic and an invisible detection of pain and guilt and its
prisoners

You need to know.
Insane power struggles and no need to try to accomplish anything
but crying and sitting up and not reacting to that train of thought. I win.
You lose and these seconds are like bees stinging steel

- John Rosenberg -

My mother's grandfather. My great-grandfather. I was five
years old when he died, yet I see his face so clearly, even now,
and I can still feel his gentle fingers on my face. He was the
only grandparent I ever knew, and although we only met briefly
when I was so young and carefree, I carry his memory very
clearly.

He was never particularly friendly towards my older
brother or myself. In fact, he carried a stiff upper lip most
of the time. Mike and I, being the affectionate young ones,
would try to climb up on his tired knees to play "horsey" or
tug at his white moustache. He would gently put us down and
tell us that we were foolish little "kinder", and go play outside.
Usually he wouldn't speak unless spoken to, and it occurs to me
now that he spent most of his short time with us sitting,
looking out a window as if patiently waiting for something.

He sat outside once on a big chair with yellow cushions
watching us play in the sprinklers. He didn't read or nag us
to be careful as most grandparents do. He just sat, watching
us play in the small fountains of water, our skin and hair
glistening in the sun. I remember running to his chair, smiling,
and asking him if I had "rosy cheeks" yet. He smiled, a rare
occasion, pinched my wet baby-smooth cheek tenderly, and told
me they would be rosy as long as I was young enough to run and
play.

I can picture his face so well as he spoke. His skin was
very pale, and held no form over his cheek bones. There were
bags under his watery blue eyes making them look tired and sad.
The smile on his thin lips faded as he looked into my young
eyes, and he raised a wrinkled, shaking hand to my head. He
kissed my wet forehead, then pulled away quickly leaving my
young mind confused with his sudden show of emotion. I wanted
to climb up on his chair and hug him, to give back the bit of
precious love he had given me, but he waved his old hand at me,
telling me to dry off and put something on before I caught a
cold. I didn't mention that it was too hot and sunny to get
On The Uselessness Of Jugs And Pipelines

I am trying to teach a friend to laugh at sadness. She screamed "I see!" when she woke, and threw the sheets on the floor. An empty picture frame wrapped in yellow cord worked through the daylight in her room, and she remembered nothing.

Every day and every night, above and above the shore comes the water, landing. It pushes at the sand, shore, shells, dirt, rocks, at the foundations of the earth, and always misses those first drops suspended in some dry cave.

I was inside. A wasp crawled with a limp up the arm of my sweater. This was after the sixth frost. Relieved, I set it outside to hover for an hour in the air.

I laugh at every attempt to stay dry when it is raining. Umbrellas, coats, houses and little stoned wedding rings... As if there were wet to be left. Against your arguments, even so, wetness on me is no greater weight than that which falls behind it, and behind it, and behind IT.

It is only leaving the first water, smelling the blue sky and the wind between the rotting trees, you should remember to be sad.

-Nicholette Roemer-

"Talk about a quiet night," he said as we leaned along the edge of the porch. It was silent now, the workmen gone for hours and the best time of day settling in around us. I looked over at my younger brother, sprawled out against the white railing carefully inspecting his hands, so much bigger than mine, for any sign of the day's work we'd put in. "How about that," he said, turning to me and grinning, "not a thing." I touched his hand. "You're finally toughening up, kiddo."

It was quiet, and we both looked over at the house going up next door. Just a guest cottage, the neighbors said when we heard about their plans to build. "It's going to be bigger than our house", we'd whispered, looking at the blueprints.

It was our summer now, to do whatever we wanted. Work up a sweat at 9:30 in the morning and sit out at night, feeling the muscles in our backs and the scratches on our arms. "It's not going to take that much longer, is it," I said quietly. We both shook our heads. It had gone a lot faster than I imagined. We weren't just putting up a house, this was a place where people would live, and sit on the porch just like we were, watching the night. I could remember the first morning, the six of us standing around the existing foundation that we were going to build on. The head of the crew, Kurt, had a thick German accent and gave me a worn leather workbelt that was a little too big and rested on my hips. I spent that first morning stringing out looped up extension cords, moving sawhorses, and unloading toolboxes. My workboots made me feel solid on the ground and made a slow clump, clump in the dirt. The day moved slowly and easily, Kurt calling out to each of us for job assignments and taking long breaks underneath a huge oak at the side of the lot.

Each morning my brother and I waited at the end of the driveway in clean t-shirts and jeans for the trucks to arrive, listening to the birds waking up and waiting to feel the hammers weigh down our arms and the nails between our teeth. If it rained in the afternoon we all sat on our porch and listened to the rain drip into buckets, leaning against the sky and looking up at the sky between the trees.
I stretched out on the porch floor and looked at the tops of the trees turning pink and then dark blue, darkness coming on fast once it had started. "Roofing tomorrow," my brother said calmly, gazing over at the place next door. It was beautiful to us, I thought. Before we started there had been only cement and earth, and now crossbeams almost glowing in the night. I waited for tomorrow, to be on the roof and scrape my elbows on the shingles, feel the hard roofing nails, and look down when all the ladders were taken away, over the people and our summer.

-Carla Christensen-
The Moon -- From Ordinary Pockets

White telephone ring
and I will answer
I am an unread fantasy
asleep in cookie crumbs.

Tell the wind
12:30
he is always late.

I don't know why I keep him
why I stay here, stillborn
in an apron pocket
waiting for the wash.

White telephone ring
you are modern enough --
cordless crescent
silent smile.

I am new and glowing,
a gelatin joey
dripping sand.
The earth is brown skin
holding my footprints.
The meadows itch
under their shadows.

One bounce
and I think
we are flying.

-Robyn Harbert-
Revolution #812 or Learning To Speak

The radio voices are coaxing, fluent
At night I cup their waves of sound.
So many words lie vibrating here,
Like war movies and oxygen tents,
Like spectres of hands.

There is a river in Vermont
Underground and deep as stone.
As a child I heard voices sing my name from underneath it
In all desire lives an element of fear
The lurid call of that water,
Slip of my foot on green rocks.

All children have tasted the blood of their bodies
Pulled off a scab to touch the red swell
Holding shells to their ears
They wait for the blood tide-
The ocean inside them
Insisting its song.

I want to sing you a celebration
Sing a hole in the larynx-cancerous croak,
Like love your voice will be magnified,
By the number of ears
And the power you took
To force out each note.

-Elisa Spindler-

For Emma Goldman

It is not a rushing river
or the sound of dogs howling
at the moon
that remind me of men.
Nor is it the sound of the
bullet leaving the gun,
but that split second when
bullet enters flesh,
I do think of you.
Locked doors and never
opened rooms,
possibly female.
Yet watching the old woman
next door chopping her wood
it is that
that makes me think of men.

-Stephanie Westcott-
Between the cars
I am switched
On and off
With light and dark.
I decide
Everything is a photo opp'
As my pen runs out of ink.

Benito's Benediction

My Friends,
You strung Il Duce
Like thick fumes about the
Gray pinnacles of the chapel Duomo
You spat black and white soil of Milan
...and what of it?

My Friends,
Feel the rumble in your stomachs
You feel
The green water line
Of the bridge, il Ponte Vecchio,
A bit higher than before
Mount the tower of Pisa
You see the ground too well
Straddle the bubbling craters of the volcano Etna,
And you talk to me about soft!

You laugh
At my head
Too swollen
To express with hands
Ma Gesù, Maria, e Giuseppe!
The rape of the olive and orange trees
In Sorrento during World War II is nothing
Compared to all the flags today in Roma,
The Sicilian eye of the Cyclops
Knows that I know
Italy tastes better upside down.

Benito Mussolini, once hailed as "Il Duce" (the Leader),
was the dictator of Italy during World War II. The Italian
citizens hanged him upside down in a street of Milan in response
to his tyrannical reign. Indeed, Italy rid itself of him years ago; however, today Italy is faced with the uncertainties of a changing natural and political environment...reminders of the power misused so long before.

-Angela Villano-
Slaughter House

I

Back in my grandfather's barn
there were cows with
marks burned on their thighs.
Grandfather, would lead them through
town and into the fields
while heat ate into their flesh.
The old man across the street from our house
sat on a chair at noon
and he waited for the cows to walk back slowly
(through a tunnel that lead into the barn,)
all of them pushed each other
through the road,
as if somehow they could
get away from themselves.

II

Now away from grandfather's barn,
away from the fields,
there is only this Slaughter House;
a metallic grave where at day it becomes an oven;
the thick smell of flesh burning through the air.
White men with their stomachs bulging from their shirts
spit on the floor, leave their spits dripping from the wall.
And the cows do not scream while they die,
and there is not one piece of shit
that is wasted here.
There is just the sudden sound of clubs
as they crush brains, leaving their bodies paralyzed
their hearts stopping slowly
while they listen to the other cows fall,
the slam of each club slamming sculls against ground
against ground, again and again,
until there is only this reality;
the men killing and whispering shit under their breath.

VI.
The 18 bulbs are of a higher,
more devoted order than myself and
a hatred arises.

VII.
"It's a joke"
I whisper
"There aren't even any cars here"
I scream.

VIII.
The world turns red or green
depending
on whether you are going
East or west on 63
Or south on 114.
"Can't you even laugh?"
I ask.

IX.
Everything changes via a moment
Tainted yellow
as the moon sinks a little
toward rising somewhere else.

X.
There is a rumbling at my back
so I find an empty seat on
the bank and put a train
between myself
and the street lights.
Between Myself

I.
Sleep alludes
So I sneak past a snoring grandmother
And enter into the night
In search of sliced cantaloupes
Who have run away from
Their loving homes (families) to be eaten.

II.
There is a moon
And the tracks glint
Like pairs of waveless excerpts from the sea.

III.
Unavoidably, I am upon them
And find my balance to be better while moving.

IV.
The street lights silhouette me
Twenty times over
But overlook the fact that the jeans
I wear
Are
Pre-faded, shrink-to-fit, stone washed, 501 Blues.

V.
There is the nightly excitement of the
Stoplights
So I pause to watch the changes.

III
Just at four o'clock in the morning
before the white men wake up from their beds,
the slaughter house is alive;
single parts like thighs, ears and everything else
are shoved in a garbage bag and hung from a hook.
The cows are standing with their black eyes open,
there is no distinction between the dead and the living,
and nothing matters here in this House;
while their thin legs bend and fall,
and in a daze they remember
an old man leading them into the fields
just as the sun was rising
before there was even the scent of death.

-Maritza Hoyos-
Longing For Blue

A girl was overly enthused about seeing the doctor. She said that she was getting blue eyes.

The Brown eyes she had were no longer attractive. The color had grown dull, faded over the years of searching, looking for something lost.

Some part of her had gone wrong. An appreciation for life was no longer felt.

She sleeps with the delicate lenses of blue as though they were really hers. And nothing immoral was ever done.

-Andrew Lande-

Charles Manson Views His Death As A Vacation

I will wake up in a hotel lobby somewhere, A place of bones, A place where the spirits of chickens Pace the hallways, their toenails Tapping out the spirits Of sounds.

It will be a climate of White sand and big sharks, Of black men doing the limbo Under huge pigs roasting on open spits, Meat cooked firm by the heat Of the laughter and red open mounts Of the natives.

Soon afterward, they puncture themselves From the bellybutton down, Releasing their legs to swim Out into water as warm as saliva Where the legs walk alone, possessing A pelvis of their own, as if the crotch Was a rudder driving through The muck-covered seaweed to where clams surface, Where barnacles grow to the size of my erotic dreams On grey rocks.

I will stay in a room Where knuckles crack Like crisp shells.

-Rick Todhunter-
Scaling The Side Of A Cliff

I always liked the fact that I don't use ropes except during times like these. When I look down and see just space and space and space and nothing to catch me except the flat, uncarving ground. I especially don't like this particular cliff. It slants upward the entire way with little more than hairline fractures for most of the way. Climbing over the hump is like trying to scale the top of an egg. Odd feeling that, I say to myself, grabbing the hump of a big egg. Your arms are over it, your legs are under it, and your butt is just catching a breeze. I almost laugh, but it's kind of hard to move my jaw, it's pressed against the rock. I really have to stop trying to distract myself and concentrate on getting over this rock. I can't stay here forever. I must look ridiculous. I try to imagine what I look like, a tiny speck of a man on a big, hard mountain. The mountain taking his sandy yellow finger and gently pushing me off. Didn't the Indians think of mountains as sleeping giants something. I guess that's what's happening, I've awakened the dead giant and now he's pushing me off with his finger like I would swat a mosquito. I imagine all the bugs I've squashed and me about to join them. Why did I try this stupid thing? Was it the machismo? the better view? the trendy outdoor clothing? No, I think I do it because it's still impossible. Most things are impossible for a short time after they're discovered--perception-wise that is. Take the first plane or rocket or movie. When they were first invented people would see them and the brain just could not handle it. They would look at it and part of them would say "that's impossible, it's just not real, it's a trick or something," even though they knew it wasn't. I wonder if the Wright Brothers felt like that when their first plane took off, or Goddard, or--whoever invented movies, Eakins or someone I think. Anyway, that's what rock climbing is like. Except it's one of the first impossible things ordinary people like me can do. You show people a bare rock face and the brain says, "a man cannot climb that without equipment", and you go ahead and do it and it just blows them away.
I remember the first time I saw someone scale a rock. I didn't believe it. It was at the Wyoming State Fair five years ago. You know the kind, major tourist trap. Showed the Ape-man frozen in ice for seventy-five cents, the paint was peeling off his face. Anyway, this Indian in a crash helmet gathers a crowd at the base of this cliff I used to repel down on the weekends and he says, "I am now going to climb this cliff bare-handed." I had just come from the Ape-man. Can you blame me for thinking it was a trick. He then walked to the rock's base and started climbing. I was sure he had tools hidden in his gloves, but it still didn't detract from my awe. With hand tools it was incredible, but bare-handed was just impossible. So after he was done he handed out business cards (instead of asking for donations to my surprise). He was teaching in the next town. I asked what tools he used and he held out two calloused hands, completely bare. I just could not believe it, it was just too amazing.

Great, now I'm going to die just because I wanted to amaze people. I don't look too amazing now, stuck on a cliff's face. Now there's a situation possible enough, being stuck, nothing a normal brain would balk at. Face it, I say to myself, sooner or later I'm going to have to move. The longer I wait the worse I'll be.

One of the Cardinal rules in rock climbing is to always have three grips... I'm going to break that rule. I release both legs and let them dangle. There is that uncomfortable feeling of the entire weight of your body in your fingers, stretching the cartilage between the joints. I hoist my right leg over the cliff. It lands and gradually slides off with nothing to stop it. The effort has made my left hand raw. I try again, extending my leg more this time, and it catches on a rut in the rock's face. I push against it while I pull my body onto the face of the rock. My left leg is still dangling over the edge. I raise myself and can just barely get the tip of my boot on the rock's face. I push off. My left leg slips off the rock which I expected but my right leg hold also slides out of the rut. I dig my knees into the edge of the rock and without thinking stretch my left hand out and probe the surface for cracks. For a few harrowing moments I have only one good hold, my right hand. Finally, my left hand finds a piece of rock jutting out from the flat surface and wraps around it. It is fairly large and my right hand also grasps it and with both hands I pull myself over the edge.

The fun part is now over. I go down the long way, a dirt path, to collect my stuff at the base of the cliff. I have attracted a modest audience of one. He approaches me grinning.

"Man, that was incredible! I've never seen anything like that in my life. It was so cool! I really thought you were screwed when you got half over that tip, but you just waited a few seconds and then shimmed right over it. Man, that was so incredible! I just can't believe you did that, man!"

-Andrew Nordvall-
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Scaling The Side Of A Cliff

I always liked the fact that I don't use ropes except during times like these. When I look down and see just space and space and space and nothing to catch me except the flat, uncaring ground. I especially don't like this particular cliff. It slants upward the entire way with little more than hairline fractures for most of the way. Climbing over the hump is like trying to scale the top of an egg. Odd feeling that, I say to myself, grabbing the hump of a big egg. Your arms are over it, your legs are under it, and your butt is just catching a breeze. I almost laugh, but it's kind of hard to move my jaw, it's pressed against the rock. I really have to stop trying to distract myself and concentrate on getting over this rock. I can't stay here forever. I must look ridiculous. I try to imagine what I look like, a tiny speck of a man on a big, hard mountain. The mountain taking his sandy yellow finger and gently pushing me off. Didn't the Indians think of mountains as sleeping giants something. I guess that's what's happening, I've awakened the dead giant and now he's pushing me off with his finger like I would swat a mosquito. I imagine all the bugs I've squashed and me about to join them. Why did I try this stupid thing? Was it the machismo? the better view? the trendy outdoor clothing? No, I think I do it because it's still impossible. Most things are impossible for a short time after they're discovered—perception-wise that is. Take the first plane or rocket or movie. When they were first invented people would see them and the brain just could not handle it. They would look at it and part of them would say "that's impossible, it's just not real, it's a trick or something," even though they knew it wasn't. I wonder if the Wright Brothers felt like that when their first plane took off, or Goddard, or—whoever invented movies, Eakins or someone I think. Anyway, that's what rock climbing is like. Except it's one of the first impossible things ordinary people like me can do. You show people a bare rock face and the brain says, "a man cannot climb that without equipment", and you go ahead and do it and it just blows them away.
Longing For Blue

A girl was overly enthused about seeing the doctor. She said that she was getting blue eyes.

The Brown eyes she had were no longer attractive. The color had grown dull, faded over the years of searching, looking for something lost.

Some part of her had gone wrong. An appreciation for life was no longer felt.

She sleeps with the delicate lenses of blue as though they were really hers. And nothing immoral was ever done.

-Andrew Lande-

Charles Manson Views His Death As A Vacation

I will wake up in a hotel lobby somewhere, A place of bones, A place where the spirits of chickens Pace the hallways, their toenails Tapping out the spirits Of sounds.

It will be a climate of White sand and big sharks, Of black men doing the limbo Under huge pigs roasting on open spits, Meat cooked firm by the heat Of the laughter and red open mounts Of the natives.

Soon afterward, they puncture themselves From the bellybutton down, Releasing their legs to swim Out into water as warm as saliva Where the legs walk alone, possessing A pelvis of their own, as if the crotch Was a rudder driving through The muck-covered seaweed to where clams surface, Where barnacles grow to the size of my erotic dreams On grey rocks.

I will stay in a room Where knuckles crack Like crisp shells.

-Rick Todhunter-
Between Myself

I.
Sleep alludes
So I sneak past a snoring grandmother
And enter into the night
In search of sliced cantaloupes
Who have run away from
Their loving homes (families) to be eaten.

II.
There is a moon
And the tracks glint
Like pairs of waveless excerpts from the sea.

III.
Unavoidably, I am upon them
And find my balance to be better while moving.

IV.
The street lights silhouette me
Twenty times over
But overlook the fact that the jeans
I wear
Are
Pre-faded, shrink-to-fit, stone washed, 501 Blues.

V.
There is the nightly excitement of the
Stoplights
So I pause to watch the changes.

III

Just at four o'clock in the morning
before the white men wake up from their beds,
the slaughter house is alive;
single parts like thighs, ears and everything else
are shoved in a garbage bag and hung from a hook.
The cows are standing with their black eyes open,
there is no distinction between the dead and the living,
and nothing matters here in this House;
while their thin legs bend and fall,
and in a daze they remember
an old man leading them into the fields
just as the sun was rising
before there was even the scent of death.

-Maritza Hoyos-
Slaughter House

I
Back in my grandfather's barn
there were cows with
marks burned on their thighs.
Grandfather, would lead them through
town and into the fields
while heat ate into their flesh.
The old man across the street from our house
sat on a chair at noon
and he waited for the cows to walk back slowly
(through a tunnel that lead into the barn,)
all of them pushed each other
through the road,
as if somehow they could
cut away from themselves.

II
Now away from grandfather's barn,
away from the fields,
there is only this Slaughter House;
a metallic grave where at day it becomes an oven;
the thick smell of flesh burning through the air.
White men with their stomachs bulging from their shirts
spit on the floor, leave their spits dripping from the wall.
And the cows do not scream while they die,
and there is not one piece of shit
that is wasted here.
There is just the sudden sound of clubs
as they crush brains, leaving their bodies paralyzed
their hearts stopping slowly
while they listen to the other cows fall,
the slam of each club slamming sculls against ground
against ground, again and again,
until there is only this reality;
the men killing and whispering shit under their breath.

The 18 bulbs are of a higher,
more devoted order than myself and
A hatred arises.

"It's a joke"
I whisper
"There aren't even any cars here"
I scream.

The world turns red or green
Depending
On whether you are going
East or west on 63
Or south on 114.
"Can't you even laugh?"
I ask.

Everything changes via a moment
Tainted yellow
As the moon sinks a little
Toward rising somewhere else.

There is a rumbling at my back
So I find an empty seat on
The bank and put a train
Between myself
And the street lights.
Between the cars
I am switched
On and off
With light and dark.
I decide
Everything is a photo opp'
As my pen runs out of ink.

-Boyd Newman-

Benito's Benediction

My Friends,
You strung Il Duce
Like thick fumes about the
Gray pinnacles of the chapel Duomo
You spat black and white soil of Milan
...and what of it?

My Friends,
Feel the rumble in your stomachs
You feel
The green water line
Of the bridge, il Ponte Vecchio,
A bit higher than before
Mount the tower of Pisa
You see the ground too well
Straddle the bubbling craters of the volcano Etna,
And you talk to me about soft!

You laugh
At my head
Too swollen
To express with hands
Ma Gesu', Maria, e Giuseppe!
The rape of the olive and orange trees
In Sorrento during World War II is nothing
Compared to all the flags today in Roma,
The Sicilian eye of the Cyclops
Knows that I know
Italy tastes better upside down.

Benito Mussolini, once hailed as "Il Duce" (the Leader), was the dictator of Italy during World War II. The Italian citizens hanged him upside down in a street of Milan in response to his tyrannical reign. Indeed, Italy rid itself of him years ago; however, today Italy is faced with the uncertainties of a changing natural and political environment...reminders of the power misused so long before.

-Angela Villano-
The radio voices are coaxing, fluent
At night I cup their waves of sound.
So many words lie vibrating here,
Like war movies and oxygen tents,
Like spectres of hands.

There is a river in Vermont
Underground and deep as stone.
As a child I heard voices sing my name from underneath it
In all desire lives an element of fear
The lurid call of that water,
Slip of my foot on green rocks.

All children have tasted the blood of their bodies
Pulled off a scab to touch the red swell
Holding shells to their ears
They wait for the blood tide-
The ocean inside them
Insisting its song.

I want to sing you a celebration
Sing a hole in the larynx-cancerous croak,
Like love your voice will be magnified,
By the number of ears
And the power you took
To force out each note.

-Elisa Spindler-

It is not a rushing river
or the sound of dogs howling
at the moon
that remind me of men.
Nor is it the sound of the
bullet leaving the gun,
but that split second when
bullet enters flesh,
I do think of you.
Locked doors and never
opened rooms,
possibly female.
Yet watching the old woman
next door chopping her wood
it is that
that makes me think of men.

-Stephanie Westcott-
The Moon -- From Ordinary Pockets

White telephone ring
and I will answer
I am an unread fantasy
asleep in cookie crumbs.

Tell the wind
12:30
he is always late.

I don't know why I keep him
why I stay here, stillborn
in an apron pocket
waiting for the wash.

White telephone ring
you are modern enough --
cordless crescent
silent smile.

I am new and glowing,
a gelatin joey
dripping sand.
The earth is brown skin
holding my footprints.
The meadows itch
under their shadows.

One bounce
and I think
we are flying.

-Robyn Harbert-
I stretched out on the porch floor and looked at the tops
of the trees turning pink and then dark blue, darkness coming
on fast once it had started. "Roofing tomorrow," my brother
said calmly, gazing over at the place next door. It was
beautiful to us, I thought. Before we started there had been
only cement and earth, and now crossbeams almost glowing in the
night. I waited for tomorrow, to be on the roof and scrape my
elbows on the shingles, feel the hard roofing nails, and look
down when all the ladders were taken away, over the people and
our summer.

-Carla Christensen-
On The Uselessness Of Jugs And Pipelines

I am trying to teach a friend to laugh at sadness. She screamed "I see!" when she woke, and threw the sheets on the floor. An empty picture frame wrapped in yellow cord worked through the daylight in her room, and she remembered nothing.

Every day and every night, above and above the shore comes the water, landing. It pushes at the sand, shore, shells, dirt, rocks, at the foundations of the earth, and always misses those first drops suspended in some dry cave.

I was inside. A wasp crawled with a limp up the arm of my sweater. This was after the sixth frost. Relieved, I set it outside to hover for an hour in the air.

I laugh at every attempt to stay dry when it is raining. Umbrellas, coats, houses and little stoned wedding rings... As if there were wet to be! Against your arguments, even so, wetness on me is no greater weight than that which falls behind it, and behind it, and behind IT.

It is only leaving the first water, smelling the blue sky and the wind between the rotting trees, you should remember to be sad.

-Nicholette Roemer-

"Talk about a quiet night," he said as we leaned along the edge of the porch. It was silent now, the workmen gone for hours and the best time of day settling in around us. I looked over at my younger brother, sprawled out against the white railing carefully inspecting his hands, so much bigger than mine, for any sign of the day's work we'd put in. "How about that," he said, turning to me and grinning, "not a thing." I touched his hand. "You're finally toughening up, kiddo."

It was quiet, and we both looked over at the house going up next door. Just a guest cottage, the neighbors said when we heard about their plans to build. "It's going to be bigger than our house", we'd whispered, looking at the blueprints.

It was our summer now, to do whatever we wanted. Work up a sweat at 9:30 in the morning and sit out at night, feeling the muscles in our backs and the scratches on our arms. "It's not going to take that much longer, is it," I said quietly. We both shook our heads. It had gone a lot faster than I imagined. We weren't just putting up a house, this was a place where people would live, and sit on the porch just like we were, watching the night. I could remember the first morning, the six of us standing around the existing foundation that we were going to build on. The head of the crew, Kurt, had a thick German accent and gave me a worn leather workbelt that was a little too big and rested on my hips. I spent that first morning stringing out looped up extension cords, moving sawhorses, and unloading toolboxes. My workboots made me feel solid on the ground and made a slow clump, clump in the dirt. The day moved slowly and easily, Kurt calling out to each of us for job assignments and taking long breaks underneath a huge oak at the side of the lot.

Each morning my brother and I waited at the end of the driveway in clean t-shirts and jeans for the trucks to arrive, listening to the birds waking up and waiting to feel the hammers weigh down our arms and the nails between our teeth. If it rained in the afternoon we all sat on our porch and listened to the rain drip into buckets, leaning against the sky and looking up at the sky between the trees.
5) I think that it is wrong. I know that these things lack the real tears, insanity of guilt. I did what you want and you demand a respect that can only be thought of in Biblical terms.

Stay away said in syllables, the only requirement is that you remain close and that these moments appeal to more than reason and logic and an invisible detection of pain and guilt and its prisoners.

You need to know. Insane power struggles and no need to try to accomplish anything but crying and sitting up and not reacting to that train of thought. I win. You lose and these seconds are like bees stinging steel.

—John Rosenberg—

My mother's grandfather. My great-grandfather. I was five years old when he died, yet I see his face so clearly, even now, and I can still feel his gentle fingers on my face. He was the only grandparent I ever knew, and although we only met briefly when I was so young and carefree, I carry his memory very clearly.

He was never particularly friendly towards my older brother or myself. In fact, he carried a stiff upper lip most of the time. Mike and I, being the affectionate young ones, would try to climb up on his tired knees to play "horsey" or tug at his white moustache. He would gently put us down and tell us that we were foolish little "kinder", and go play outside. Usually he wouldn't speak unless spoken to, and it occurs to me now that he spent most of his short time with us sitting, looking out a window as if patiently waiting for something.

He sat outside once on a big chair with yellow cushions watching us play in the sprinklers. He didn't read or nag us to be careful as most grandparents do. He just sat, watching us play in the small fountains of water, our skin and hair glistening in the sun. I remember running to his chair, smiling, and asking him if I had "rosy cheeks" yet. He smiled, a rare occasion, pinched my wet baby-smooth cheek tenderly, and told me they would be rosy as long as I was young enough to run and play.

I can picture his face so well as he spoke. His skin was very pale, and held no form over his cheek bones. There were bags under his watery blue eyes making them look tired and sad. The smile on his thin lips faded as he looked into my young eyes, and he raised a wrinkled, shaking hand to my head. He kissed my wet forehead, then pulled away quickly leaving my young mind confused with his sudden show of emotion. I wanted to climb up on his chair and hug him, to give back the bit of precious love he had given me, but he waved his old hand at me, telling me to dry off and put something on before I caught a cold. I didn't mention that it was too hot and sunny to get...
sick. Instead, for the first time in my young life, I didn’t speak. I ran back to the sprinklers to play with my brother, avoiding my great-grandfather for days.

He died within the next week, peacefully. I never cried for him, I was too young to understand death. I wasn’t too young to see the love he gave me for the first time, the only time.

-Leslie Kleinberg-

1) The cruelty is the substance hidden deep below the level of thought. Cultivate the reasoning, hide from the abstainment, never a nectar without savage consistency

2) The reason why I tell you this is that you are and can be wrong. Wrong as the night that never knocks twice. Foolish as the day with its sacred sense of optics, Twice mistaken, mums grow in silent moments when the quiet gets too loud. You may tell me not to wander but I can still keep my face in the wind

3) Blindness, Suffocated savior of Momentary wisdom. Three times sight is fright and other reason to fear. The square of sound is a completeness of everywhere, a euphoria of warmth for faces that follow none but the cascade of precise presence. to hide from more than mountain is to carve a grave from the plaster of dreams

4) The tone is death. The reason a covered whimper, through the deep congestion of the night, a heart refrigerated its sadness and the proximity was not the enough that some would ask for. These are the reasons for the silhouette. Life is its reason for asking
Taking It In

Finally, I have found some place to sit. Beside some lake. Beside some different language of the water. And if it wasn't for this beach, I would've been swallowed by the waves by now. I am cold with this sureness. I am frigid with some other sort of indifference, because something is here, and something is not. I want to put my hands into the water, and pull it towards me. Like something I have wanted to do for years. And because I am speaking to myself, I think I am speaking to nothing, and then everything at once. The lucid air chills me, goosebumps rise. Tiny mountains on my skin. Then as if to gather warmth, my hand travels up and down my leg, and I wish it were the pulling of a wave instead. Take it in slow, and pull it back. My fingers clench at my knee, and I know that it is only me, that I am tugging, that I am just getting to know again. And because the waves are getting nearer, I also know that I am only with myself. And the light around me is just light. And the rocks sliding underwater, are just rocks. Water is only an element.

-Mariana Hellmund-
The Time Of Motion

The first thing people notice about you is your eyes, Liquid green. They are always there, Never lost in abstraction, always focused Tightly. They never miss taking everything in. Those eyes would exhaust most people. They drew me into the green, the quiet places Until one day I knew I was fading They had absorbed me and were stretching past Letting everything fall in. Suddenly I was nothing, a mark on a wall A scratch along the surface. Living in a place without name or end. Leaving me trying so hard to forgive The scope of your eyes To which nothing can matter more than another. It is your talent, your call. Judgements are still, it is in the motion, the knowing That the beauty lies. I know this is my way of paying As I drown in your liquid green eyes.

-Justin Peacock-

Why I Fear Men In Dark Glasses

(for Luke Karamozov)

Luke, you have been coming to me for years; each time a woman disappears then reappears in a trunk or the woods, killed neatly and without remorse. You have never liked to hurt people, feeling guilt only because of the families. Somewhere in me that makes sense. Your brother was not so considerate; raping that woman in the Safeway parking lot. They found her baby covered in blood the next morning, wandering in circles, pulling at her body. Your brother still denies this and the other women who died in the shadow of his violence. Denial was never a part of you, and the honesty with which you confessed shocked everyone. Now you say you can control your rage and fear. Your eyes can't lie, so you have covered them. If I saw you now, my reflection would be the same as in any dark glasses, distorted. Take them off, and you are the angry, naked prisoner you were in Marquette, before your hair grew long, and you learned this control. It's this passion I could have loved, my own reflection that I fear. For that truth, I would have tried to free you.

-Dawn Patch-
Thousands of grains
of sand
part their ways
for me
with indifference.
They lose no
home nor family
by me.
The wind flies
across my
face
with an ease I
cannot
grasp.
His life is destined
by nothing
but himself.

-Bryan Smith-

Latin Story

Suzie draws little clocks on her paper. They vary in
style, plain clocks with bold numbers, digital clock radios,
elaborately carved grandfather clocks, but they are all set
to the same time. "Tempus Fugit," if only that were true,
it would be the most valuable thing she had learned in this
class. She closes her eyes and by sheer force of will tries
to move the time to three fifteen. "Oh, femina, servae tuae
sunt parvae, servae meae sunt magnae. Oh, woman, my slaves
are large, your slaves are small. In ancient Rome, the size
of one's slaves was source of great pride..." the insect
woman drones on. She leans over her book, shoulders humped,
eyes bulging under her thick glasses. She is barely darker
than the white walls of the classroom. Suzie imagines her in
a vault, deep underground, studying the ancient manuscripts.
"Remember," says Mrs. Chestnutt, "don't call it a dead
language, call it a classical language. Latin is the language
of God. And for all we know, there could be some remote tribe
still speaking it somewhere."

"So why don't you just go join it?" whispers a voice
behind Suzie. There isn't a window in the room, just an opaque
skylight caked with dirt. Suzie feels her chest will cave in
if she doesn't get out of the room. She looks down and notices
that she has torn up five sheets of notebook paper without even
realizing it. She flicks the paper into the curly hair of the
girl in front of her. The voice behind her speaks again.
"You don't want to be here, I don't want to be here. Look at
these people. This is the most pointless thing I have ever
learned in my life." Suzie isn't sure if the voice is directed
to her. It isn't someone she knows; it is a deep voice- a
little southern and slow in the vowels.

"It must be a transfer student," she thinks.

"You know, I bet if we got up right now and left, old
bughead wouldn't even notice," he says. Suzie is surprised;
she thought she was the only one who noticed Mrs. Chestnutt's striking resemblance to an insect. "I bet if we got up right now and left, she would never know," he says again. She feels fingers on her neck, under her hair. "Yes, I'm talking to you. Want to do it? A little rebellion would be good for you."

She gets the feeling he is making fun of her, but she can't quite tell. "Come on; all we have to do is stand up and slip out the back." She flips her hair and slowly turns around. She is afraid to look at him, and she knows that he can feel it. "I'll count to three and then we'll get up. One, two,..."

"Shut-up," Suzie says much louder than she intended. The few people who are awake turn around quickly, but Mrs. Chestnutt continues "And idiomatic Latin is one of the most interesting subjects I have personally encountered..."

-Kata Chillag-

Fool's Thought

Lying face up
in the sand.
Waves crash against
the rocks
spilling their essence
across my skin.
Each wave speaks
a childhood
I once longed to
be rid of.
Each wave curses me
and
my desire to
return.

Birds glide,
with the grace
of the wind,
over my now
sunburned face.
Their breasts taunt
me
with a freedom
I have not
seen.
They do not know of,
or do they
care of,
the bounds that
I know.
Dogs

I fell in love with a girl because she said her name was Sam.
We made English muffins;
I begged - is there anything you want me to do?
She answered let me use the knife before you stick it in the jelly. I howled.

All that night I thought of Sam,
of a black laborador named Sam who had barked with the voice of the hidden dog inside of me,
of the Wallpole family across the street who had thrown rocks at the puppy Sam.

Sam had learned from me and my brother to hate the pompous neighborhood and to voice the disgust that boiled mute within us.
We developed a reputation - the mean dog on the block.
The long summer that my parents were separated, Sam and I frolicked and embraced in the fenceless front yard, ran together barking at the Wallpoles whenever they emerged from the swamp, chasing them all the way into their kitchen.
My sister visiting home from Vanderbilt was annoyed at the new menace, annoyed at how we disregarded the letters from the Wallpole’s lawyer that arrived more and more regularly.

In the fall we took on another dog, a poodle.
Sam saved him from careless dashes into the road and nominated himself patient teacher.
But twice in January we found Sam beside other roads, stripped of his tags, drugged, the second time with the scar from a baseball bat on his head.
One night Mr. Wallpole finally came up our driveway, pitchfork in one hand, shotgun in the other, "get rid of your God Damned dog.".
Father stepped outside and the grey men, a century between them, raised fists. Dad drove him away, his chest pounding for the first time in years, and in confused desperation, physically sickened by his neighbors, doubtful that we could ever sell the house and move to a place where Sam could be free, gave Sam a deer-sized dose of Valium and drove him into the woods and left him there. We never speak of this in my house. Never.

Two days later the poodle ran in front of a truck when I was at the mailbox and died in my arms, slowly, becoming less and less of a dog until he was no more of a dog than I was.

-John Duncan-
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<td>If Poems Were Food...I Would Starve</td>
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<tr>
<td>I need right now to write a poem about the joy of putting on an old school sweatshirt to play football in the orange autumn air, but it's already been done, and I wouldn't want to bore you.</td>
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<td>I am always last, except to meals.</td>
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<td>I like to walk behind and listen to the sound voices make suspended in the air like echoes of unformed memories.</td>
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<td>There was a time when we didn't know that running too fast or walking too slow would break our hearts.</td>
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<td>Last night I thought about the choice between immortality and art and ignored the possibility of having neither.</td>
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<td>Go on without me; there is something dying here under the papery leaves.</td>
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</table>

-Tristan Rehner-
"I worry about whether or not a thing is poetic, rather than whether or not it is truthful. I have even come to believe that poetry is the only truth."

-Jennifer Storch-
"ος μεγαλο ηρμινος"

(But nobody could catch a Big Sparrow.)
- Xenophon

"Before I get too old for walking,
I'd like to get to Newfoundland.
I've always wanted to visit
Newfoundland, walking slow."

Helen Petrebeiko
aredwheelbarrow

Dedicated to the passing of ghosts

Tristan Tzara

Nichollette 

Interlochen Arts Academy
Interlochen, Michigan 49643

October 1987