

Poem w/ Ipod

Seeking respite,
I put the earbuds in.
After initial forcefulness – snug!
Like leather shoes.
Or a new love.

Then:

Hidden wires transport sound
and electrons bounce:
off on, off on, off.
The digital syncopation
overcomes Zeno's Arrow:
0 1, 0 1, 0.
A pair of states switch,
sounding a whole invisible.

Music is the space between notes they say;
the next beat – though improbable – is
expected
in the infinitesimal zeros of sound (where I
live)
like the empty coffee cups
of downed blackness.

If not omega,
temporary ohm -
a sonorous patina for reality
which becomes little more
than pathetic fallacy:
the windshield wipers beating
cleanliness for the driver's perspective.

ABBY MCMILLEN

Spring, Near Whiteman Air Force Base

On the windowsill, a wasp
still tucked into winter
awakens in the first
spring sun, unfolds its legs and wings
and absorbs new warmth.
We repair a porch screen
above him, drive a staple into mold-
soft wood and trim away
the excess. Down in the holler
wild violets unfurl their purple
and tree frogs croak
to oaks whose new leaves
are poised for listening —

Then, the familiar buzz
of B-2 bombers, three
in sight for just a few seconds.
They leave in their path
a swath of stillness —
forsythias withhold
their yellow shouts
and dogwood buds
resist the urge to burst. Only
the oak leaves quiver.
We come here
to remember who we are,
and are reminded.

POETRY FLYER

ALWAYS FREE, ALWAYS TITILLATING THE PUBLIC EAR

SARAH TODD

Untitled

You knelt in the garden, ten thousand miles
away from them now. In the garden staggered
with iris -- paper ghosts giving themselves up.
You dropped each match, cooled, to the
ground. Twenty-four candles and the standard
petals burned. How a seed breaches, awoken
at that time of night. The next day you would
rise to blue-white snow sloped like shoulders
bared. Precision in segments: breaking icicles
from limb to limb. And your hunger spread
inside you like an atlas. Hurry. When you
speak from all directions you never need a
name. When you come home, who will see
you.

Ghazal

When I wake up I believe I can read your
scarf like the letter, these snarled hooked-
together rows like cursive which not even
goddamn Kentucky Derby hats know how to
write anymore.

You explain you're meant as an emblem. You
discuss the pike's carnivorous appetite and the
history of cholera in the middle ages as well as
the particular smell of wet wool when your
father came home from midnight fishing, his
sound clatter of trying not to be heard.

Halfway through the investigation, Detective
R. realized it wasn't a very good mystery, and
nobody cared. It was heavy on first-person
pronouns and furthermore, weren't detectives
just people with no one to talk to? He forgot
his notebook in a taxi. His roommate covered
the bulletin board with restaurant reviews and
Marmaduke cartoons. The cartoons were
good clues, but he couldn't tell. He left his
holster with an ex-girlfriend he'd never go
back to. Eventually Detective R. left himself
in a Queens laundromat, though the man who
emerged hours later bore his white folded
undershirts and clean socks and detergent
scented with Alps.

The mystery, however tiresome, kept on.

A detective is a person with exactly one
person to talk to.

White birds nesting in throats with their heads
tucked under their wings. Years ago, we were
walking in each other's footprints.

Formula I Breaks Down, Patron Saint of Indecision

Grief to art, but if your grief
is bent at the altar of lost art you thought
you had, wherefore grief?
To bad art! Plain songs.

COGITATE US

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CARL JAMES GRINDLEY

This One Is A

Pool of ideas, but its
Water reflects no one, its
Depths hold no one. In
It, ideas and words follow in
Waves, arriving and departing easily.
I have listened now for more
Than six hours, have written
A march of words on a fraying November.
I have been still. I have
Watched. There have been things: Metro
Smells, Gaulois and garlic,
Awful face-stained snotrags
And the sight of dark-haired
Men in Homburg hats, neon
Dragons, and entire cities ablaze, but
I only have shards; each is
A mirror and reflects its
Creator, flawed and useless. Together
And reflecting themselves they make
A fractured whole, a slim painted veil
Stained with the idiotic grin
Of no one in particular.

Memo to the Vice President of Hartford
Insurance:

A poem about order

Can never replace order.

Over The Long Time Things Talk Us Gently:

These words are eaten by
Brambles, these words are eaten by
Leaves. Butterflies in Japan fly *cho*
Cho, wings beating so-softly, anyhow, our
language
Does not do them justice. The concrete
Is a scar that all the
Cultured ivies in the world cannot

Heal; it has only been seven months,
Yet I cannot even open my
Window to breathe, my building is
Sealed, ceiling-air-fed hollow by metal
Ducts, while outside life is buried by
Asphalt three meters thick. When someone
Smashes through everyone stares, surprised at
The wet brown earth. Over the
Long time things talk us gently,
Un-listening except sometimes when we turn
And something inside smashes through. I
Was talking yesterday to some man,
Staring at the earth, brown and
Fertile, I cannot remember what about.

Oh, Jesus, Lora liked Japan, fell
In love with it the way you might slowly find
Yourself doing so at work—sitting a few
desks
Away from Japan, the sunlight coming in
Just so—staring at Japan's
Face for a bleak year, the stress building
And building up until, you take
Japan into the copy room at the Christmas
party, unzip
Japan's short schoolgirl skirt, ease
Down Japan's Hello Kitty panties, tear the
buttons
Off Japan's shirt, undo
Japan's bra, and then, afterwards
Find tiny paper animals
On your desk for few embarrassing months,
Maybe more, until you quit your job,
And stop thinking about Japan—
deliberately—
Until you are so old it no longer matters.

Found In Abstraction Is

An idea of order, created not
In Key West or in some dull Hartford cubicle,
but

In their absence. Look, see the wings
Of many birds in flight, many birds
Whose migration drains the skies
Of blue and whispers black afresh.
Rape is only rape, weeding a ditch
Is only weeding a ditch,
A holocaust can only be
The cursed and closed door
Of reality; unfathomable
Truth which, as far as order goes,
Goes beyond absence and back into flight.

This One Is For A Pregnant

Girl who never lived except in
The space of a week. I
Loved her, thinking up obscure and
Irritating priests where none belonged, finding
All sorts of cowls and cassocks
And collars and debts and anguished
And constant calls to duty and
Church and mankind, and then, the
Sails wide, the sea wild, I had this idea
To write virginity out a thousand
Million zillion billion times and hope
For the best, and, still, horses
Stared out of run-down fields,
And kidneys, houses, and rock
Wall walks guarded just about nothing,
Sure, there is something that does not like a
fence,
But there are a lot more fucking things that
just do not care.
I had the idea of shrinking this
Maybe-pregnant person into something that
Fit into a rally, or a
Code word, or a romance; what
A dead head, what a perplexed
God of sloth and lust and
Juice: the daylight was streaming in,
And my eyes saw stunned and
Ignoble nothing in a tardy teaspoon

Of red-brown fluid. Everywhere life goes on,
And it was all some obvious
Failure right from the start, the
Point made just long enough to
Stun me, and leave me mad
Enough to care from
Then to now, that it was
Nothing, and never would be again.
So?

JARED ROSCOE

Torres del Paine II (fragment)

It's so stupid
to write about nature
in any realist way.
"Come here and see it yourself,"
I would say.

Or else come to my Japanese garden
that will copy that verduous stream
trickling down from the Torres.
It has those great little Japanese trees
and small, hardwood shrubberies with small
green leaves,
sometimes with sharp edges but always
stiff.
And still the best of all,
the shrub with modest pink flowers
poking out from the greens.
They have a subtle perfume that you can
only
catch with your nose in it
like the accidental closeness of a woman.