

5-1-2013

Due Partly To Inertia

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DUE PARTLY TO INERTIA

By

Justin Lee Irizarry

Bachelor of Arts in English

University of North Texas

2007

Master of Arts in Creative Writing

University of North Texas

2010

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

Department of English

College of Liberal Arts

The Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

May 2013



THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the thesis prepared under our supervision by

Justin Lee Irizarry

entitled

Due Partly to Inertia

be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

Department of English

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May 2013

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ABSTRACT

Due Partly To Inertia

By

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Prof. Donald Revell, Examination Committee Chair

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In the preface to *Leaves of Grass* Walt Whitman said, “The poets of the kosmos advance through all interpositions and coverings and turmoils and stratagems to first principles. They are of use—they dissolve poverty from its need, and riches from its conceit.” My poetry aims to exist in Whitman’s ‘kosmos’ and in doing so advance through the turmoil and the strategies of certainty to something resembling principles. Politics is a common theme; it is not in an attempt to write political poetry, but an attempt to not leave anything out. Other themes throughout this manuscript include death, music, wanting, having, not-having, science, space, comedy, sex and the dreary light of zoo. My poetry has been heavily influenced by the poets Weldon Kees, Frank O’Hara, William Blake, Larry Levis, Allen Ginsberg and John Ashberry (to name a few) because these poets wrote poetry that hoped to whole everything, incorporating and impugning all the culture they could into their poems. Whether that included other poets, music, movies, paintings, television or anything that might be considered culture (high-brow or low-

brow) these poets kept their minds and poetry open, and my poetry aims to do the same; because as Walt Whitman says later in his preface to *Leaves of Grass*, “Anyone and everyone is owner of the library.”

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I.

A Metaphysical Problem Pragmatically Considered

On your gravestone it might read
there weren't enough explosions.

The air will be good for breathing.
The sky will continue to do

nothing . The difference
is we never realize faces
are always made of water.
Photographs
are why we see particles
and even between them there is
this distance. Existence
is the funneling
of windows into houses.
A slimming of the panorama.

Before there was hard architecture there was running.
The silence of a noncommittal infinity.

Still,
under us there are no roads
only basalt gravel
death and forgetting
Memory is a war between time and cake
Hands and feet

Grief is the filth after the body's leaving.

Campaign in Poetry, Govern in Prose.

Republican: Fleet shadow, I laugh at your pompous graying.

Democrat: A colorful hat

Art: What is a game that does not admit it is game?

Speech: Citizens, these laws have gotten out of hand. This unchanging game of blame and trepidation. These mittens of shit. The artifice has risen against us. They say freedom is a given right, but that it is not free. Citizens, you cannot price a right. There are turbid moats of lobbyists surrounding our elected representatives. Their soft hands reach up from muck to grab the darkness beneath the sleeves of our suited representations. Citizens, they sell us something they themselves do not own. I remind you that we do not own anything. To own is to admit to a permanence that does not exist.

The real threat? Our deafening sense of entitlement, our feeble monument to boredom. Citizens, I could piss on a sheet of paper and call it a law.

If you will permit me the acquiescence, we must rise like heat in a house with an attic, we must rise against anything that separates us with the idea that it is right. Let us wash away this sense of owing and earning in the eventual rain, let us wash away the stink of possessing and leave the bare glare of being.

Citizens there are no tangible ideas

When your children's children ask what it was like when people worked as if salary was a destination, tell them art dismantled the sad tournament. Competition is the politics of trophies. And citizens, we are not confused by the shiny; there are no natural teams.

Thesis of speech: Flags on caskets.

The Selfish vs. The Lazy

The streets are flooded
with the ejaculate of the homeless
And you people want to rely on the police

I've discussed it with the judges & they're<other people
They're stubbornness & they're failure

The physical greed of their being, why are there not jails for this

What am I supposed to tell my children
That they have needs, that they've waited
for hands their whole lives

This is a genesis' mistake
A problem I cannot belong to

Listen, I speak for polish
I speak for culture
The— even landscapes are internal

What is a society if not an agreement to wash
To not live so closely to the ground

God dammit, where have all the bootstraps gone!

My children have had nightmares about this.
Not about ever being beggared but about the man they saw

Him specifically. That pervert.
They see the horror

and here you are
Virtue the comedian
In the moment's podium

Stubbornity and the vanity of ignorance, the vanity of failure

What I'm saying is the ground grabs everything
it's the sky that could do better

Inmigración

I see them in back kitchens cooking authenticity
I see them negating the chaos of lawns
appallingly trying not to misinterpret freedom.
I see the subtle pack themselves into anonymity
building and retreating, Scarves under hats and the beds of trucks.

I see politicians hunting scapegoats mostly,
Men who adopt oppression as if it didn't have enough fathers.

Yes, there is blood on the feet of tender men and women
whose white fate walks over the brown ground history
And I see them looking down on the sweat backs of
those who thankfully scrape change from under the table,
from those that are never done with their endless cake.

We Want Our Country Back

Let's make signs. Let's forget time
only moves toward. Let's forget history
is paved with slavery. Let's forget there
is still slavery. Let's pretend poverty
is a birth defect. Let's pretend there
are kings, that there is sanctity.
Let's pretend there is magic paper.
Let's pretend famous is a super power.
Let's pretend war is not the dung of country.
Let's not forget they are dying.
Let's forget they were already dying.
Let's ignore the retarded antelopes.
Let's pretend there is remembering.
Let's make pyramids, let's pretend it
ends with the white clouds. Let's ignore the night
Let's be numerous. Let's be individuals.
Let's pretend somebody already made heaven.
Let's say it has gates.

Pyramids and Liberal Guests

People refuse to admit someone could have been intelligent or cruel enough to build pyramids using the available resources, and since we are dealing with the dead and an intense attention to cats mystically we are obliged to be open minded. For some it's hard to imagine charcoal slaves manually laboring large quadrate stones up a man-made mountain in the name of death or against death in the name of memory or narcissism. As if slavery to the human-gods is unfamiliar, somehow unimaginable. One liberal guest on the news said he is fearful of the shrinking middle class. He feared that people seemed to lean too much on future debt. He argued the mass collapsing of the middle class would create an ocean of the lower class. A chaos much like the idiot chains of slavery. He did not mention the bridge between modern banking and indentured servitude. The broken necked pushing boulders up the road to a man who collects boulders: exploitation often builds monuments. Perhaps due to time constraints they had to edit the man's conversation on business and how it is inherently pyramidal. How he feared the conglomerates absorbing of the obelisk bricks. Eventually, he said, most of us will be working like slaves for one of the very few tapering monoliths. He probably said, in business opportunity knocks tyrannically first. The network most likely broke for commercials.

Gutters

The sun doesn't leave the hemispheres turn their backs to it
and my brother never called me during the day.
People had stopped giving him money so I knew
he needed to be picked up somewhere.
He told me he wasn't wearing a shirt
that he was in a parking lot of a grocery store.
At first I was embarrassed for him. Or at him
then I remembered how high performs,
the area of that crack rock euphoria, that that
feeling is the opposite of being embarrassed.

What I remember most is how comfortable the dark felt.
How confident he looked under the streetlamp.

I tried for empathy; I wanted to say I understood his thirst for area
A place that he couldn't belong to

but all I really had was analysis.
I started talking about the coop of the proletarian.
The burden of invisible systems. Cocaine and Law schools.
The choices he didn't get to make. The slum clichés.
He didn't want to talk about expectations
he didn't want to talk about representation.
Looking back I think I should have said something
about the stacked bodies of poverty, that passivity.
The strenuous work of vanishing.
How they only sees the symbolism.
I didn't even ask him where his shirt was
I couldn't stop looking at his teeth.

A Novel

Chapter 1: Death

I too hate its encompassing
white hands.

The moths fly from its darkness.

Chapter 2: Reservations

If I have no shoulders
How will I open
doors?

Chapter 3: Time

That wealth that annuls all distance.

While we talk?

All languages
say
nothing.

Chapter 4: Melancholy

I have seen petals
beg for corners.

Chapter 5: Space

Blood continues to follow music.

Chapter 6: God

The stars do not believe in each other

Chapter 7: Love

I can't imagine life without
hands
or a shoulder
where she
lays her head
waiting

or not waiting
for the buildings
to cover the stars

Chapter 8: Youth

Even before
the pages have turned
the horses
carry the hands
of clocks
waiting for midnight.

Or they will
grow
like everything
that dies.

II.

Dear Happiness, You're No Thunder

Spare me the speech on the purity
of Inuit throat singers or the elegance
of the wooded instruments.

The first music was *boom*
and it came without practice.

We grew thumbs to grip sticks, then we learned
bang, and I'm sure heads were nodding then
the first time, just like now; It's how brains pray.

Heart: *Beat.Silence.Beat.Silence/crash*

Our lover the thump, the archipelago
of memory, the cadence of fuck silence;
it's not how fast you get there
because there is no there
it's how elegantly you stumble.
Music is how we've come to defy gravity.
Though it's just a joke to silence
drum thumps and a cymbal crash.

Upon Hearing Maggot Brain by Funkadelic

I despise the word soul
so I will call it Eddie Hazel's
workshirt. The least touchable
of all things.

The audible harp of sentience
or paychecks for consciousness.

Lorca called it *Duende* & George Clinton
named it Maggot Brain. An apartment
nobody gets to live in.
A space we've made for grief.

How do you know distance?

Consider the quiet billboard of the moon,
the stars that keep their mouths shut,
the atoms in your right hand came from
a different star than those in your left.
Atom's mass, emptiness between the particles,
which is to say that most of ourselves is empty,
at the very least full of separation

They say: George Clinton said to him to
"Imagine someone just told you your mother died
But that the rumor wasn't true."

Here they are the martyr stars
so far away means ago,
and when they explode
like thumbs on garden hoses,
 that partial darkness,
the gather shatters & the scattered gravities.
This is how I imagine his fingers with the fretwork
expanding because you can only fall so far into yourself

The delay sounded like it came from nowhere.
The appropriate fuzzbox, the wah pedal named
because it gives guitars weep & scream

It's minute 4 of 10:20
This motherfucker just went supernovae.
Yes, many. Energies potential meeting kinetic
& right now I don't believe in silence

& though this isn't dance music there is dance to it,
the measure of matters coming in and out of existence.
You think it's over but he gathers again,
and not without walking, but then again with the exploding
because George said the rumor was not true.
Need I remind you of the second death?

I am not myself but something more cosmological.
I am the LSD George Clinton took.
I am many galaxies, I am many maggots.
I am the many brains electric with drapery.
I am the woman with black dandelion hair
up to her neck in dirt, silent and yet still screaming
looking up from the earth, one of sun's many rumors

"I have tasted the maggots in the mind of the universe
I was not offended."

LP

Why have we stopped talking about albums?
The dangling keys of new, while fluorescent,
give nothing to (love) the persistence of vision,
the stairway wit of evolution, or how
moments easily become plastic.

We are far too aware to be competent.
Meaning is editing and now we tread the virtual;
those invisible kiosks. The half-actual made not
of mirrors but of the descriptions of mirror-like views.

We are more like moths than we'd like to admit.

If measurable time is anything
it is the origin of skepticism.
The past wax.
First opportunity then retrospect,
freedom then reverberation.
Hard art is not timeless but time itself,
the limited chaos of now made tangible by hands,
it then approaches history in some way.

Krautrock

I hold my mortality
like stable hands cup water.

I mean, who are we that simply exist.

I hold my mortality
like a window that has been painted shut.

I hold my mortality
like the desks hold wars

I hold my mortality
only in the way stars hold names.

On a certain hillside
stones believe god
will manifest himself
in the form of a stone.

I hold my mortality
like stones hold time.

And yet there is so much
beauty in hyperbole
like a tree taut with distance,
waiting.

I hold my mortality
like nothing is funny.

I hold my mortality
like pain holds all other feeling.

I hold my mortality like the only morality
Is do not die yet.

Fugazi

Coming from where
they did
the aggression seemed
appropriately bottled.
Reticent and consequential;
a flick of the thumb,
the bombast of moment.

There isn't much room
for commerce here. Who
needs the tables. There
are ideas, and they are bigger
and more just than this.
Larger than the people
in this room, and by this room
I mean moment again.

When is outrage not fitting?
no one is insinuating
complacency, being
angry is one thing, let's
not throw our elbows
into the throats of others.

The idea is that violence
begets outrage not violence
equals more performative
violence.

I heard once they were homeless by choice.
I once heard they ate only rice.
Well I heard they sold their souls for their fingers.
Authority: "That was Robert Johnson."
Well, I heard they never use toilets.
I once heard they gave children grenades.
I heard the children gave them the grenades.

Pink Moon

Sleep practices action.
Time taught in coma.
No night too introspective,
no day that didn't leave to beat the traffic,
In the body blood is beats.

The night is a pitbull harp,
In the body blood is bruising.
Cloudless thy name is bus stop,
Syphilis it says on the decorations.
The sidewalks smell of meat vapor.
Who's barking the dogs?

Where's there precedent?

In the body blood is burning.
Ebb and blowhard,
need and break wind
Did someone say snacks?
Hunger's pungent, our throats are made of acid.
You can only pray for attention,
you can only god your own vanity,
And the gas stations will be loud
And filled with people
Wanting.

What bare maximum?

In the body blood is beating, running
Circles, winning nothing.
Converse shadows made of need
It's the wanting that makes us different.
The stars have their parking lots.
Remember Marx, and the constant revolutions of space-time.
This galaxy's circling a drain, why are we so prone to failure?

Centripetally speaking our center is always a bottom.
In the body blood is broken,
cellular plates,
Certain purpose.
In time death is schooled in the art of sleeping.
Grief is the uniform for memories' profession,
in the body muscles are pink.
Work is what we've been given.

All music: from the knees

Body thy name is doom,
Pink, Pink, Pink, Pink, Pink Doom.

III.

Guadalupe We Were Hoping for Roses, Not Your Stupid Picture

The canvas is always
corrupted by mysticisms'
need for knees on the ground.
Pleased to be limited;
There are elevators
made of ectoplasms.

Why not believe it?
There's so much cake in faith
Why not love the kneeling?

Memory called to tell you
it's okay to distort because
the past is just as impossible
as the future. Manifest Hegemony
or how finite resources
annul the myth of the infinite
individuality. Time bitches everybody.
Guadalupe what were you thinking?
Implication is a housecoat,
use it to look like you belong here

Oh mythical virginity unfuck us please!

Blank slate slavery or how hierarchy
mystifies over time. Yes, our hearts
are asses bent over, the symbolism
is making a chump out of you.

Eventually we will name the entire past Guadalupe
Where did the moments go? They're with Guadalupe
I think I have forgotten who I used to be? Fuckin' Guadalupe

Accuracy

"I don't throw darts at balloons, I throw balloons at darts"

-Joe Montana

The invention of consciousness
was as brutal as it was the birth of the past
tense. The past itself not a place, but the echo
of a place. Placation, endless rearranging
and no tables to speak of. Memory
is a bag of grapes from the grocery store.

The super market does nothing for the depiction of chaos' position in the universe.

We are a more durable smoke, or if you prefer
a more gooey fire. What I would really like
to know is what isn't a moving target?
We are all concerned with the weather
of limitation. Power is made of mostly
overrated, what's important is how we handle
the indignity, the reaction. Greatness: soft eyes
to see everything as a blurry whole, not to lull
in expectation, but to see opportunity in a world
where nothing is fixed. Between distance
and chaos there is free will, or if you prefer
something more ornate, there is the opportunity
for the staggering. But I digress, everything that does
not need you is real.

The Current

There is a building on top of my building,
and like several other institutions it's immobile.

But these are titles, I could have easily said
living is a type of diminishing. Which reminds

me of when I said justice when I actually meant
self-indulgence. There is something disgusting

about accredited satisfaction, if not disgusting
then intermutually vain. Why do you hate joy? Someone

asked me. I wanted to say irony is the shadow
of joy, but instead I made fun of his taste in music.

Your music reminds me of the stock photographs
given to make frames more sellable. The hiss and

click of refrigerator silence. The gloss and fragility
of toys that accompany burgers and side fries.

There are walls that accompany my building
because the future is uncertain, it is always winter.

Workshop

Encouragement means nothing,
like the knives of quotation marks.

In any event, what do you say
to a man who only has description?

It's true the moon can pull it away?
all these numbers beginning

with science—This world is more
than just a metaphor for silence?

But what does intimate music
sound like to the out-side? Onyx.

Death is continuity's gravitas, its gather.
The matter which we all contest with whatever

arms we can use to crawl from
this each subtle epoch. On another planet

the artifice recognizes people
for whom they reiterate. They too

pull flowers from the ground that created
them, admitting there is no lasting exactly.

Invisible Leashes

Flying is probably more like swimming
than I would like to imagine. Sure, there's oxygen
but birds' lungs are comparatively more like gaunt rooms.
Damn damp ballast and our malnourished alveoli.
At least we are bipedal. Upstanding. Feet
gave birth to hands and there is not civilization
without hands, or perhaps they were once
whiskers on the face of the primordial it.
Habit is the fetal bracelets of aboriginal being.

Molecularly, we become a part of where we walked,
then this dirt fills that slow hollowing.

Tradition is a carnal anthem. The universe is itself process.

Between the past, which is no longer, and the future, which
is not yet, there are the aisles of now, which are empty
if dimly lit. We carry the past in that we are decayed by it.
The future is this now or it thunders in a corner of the room.
Perhaps a subtle universe's lapsed collapsing
A different gravity. Either way
Humanity is tethered to the earth if it is anything.

Hydrocodone -500mg]

Ambition always dims

waiting for signs
pendulous leaves
and if it left

pain—regardless
it climbs
on the sill of some
febrile heft.

Life is how I choose to distort it.

[Hydrocodone -650mg]

Lower still

distance
is where a door might go.
I stumble from it.

I am the gray lakes
of ladder shadows.

Oh we have made progress in pain.

[Hydrocodone -750mg]

I am tired now

I am subtle

I would like to say poetry
is the opposite of money

but it is our uses
that forsake us.

If it is raining
I cannot tell.

Sleep

A parade of frames,
usual and curious
The body's performance
of time. Stage perpetuating;
the silent idle of our bones
palm-muted and threadbare hiss

A conversation for balance
Activity and subtle oblivion

The moon is slate,
and I have seen nothing unending

There is prospect in dark matter:
I imagine it to be a meaty stillness,
the antithesis of cumulonimbus.
The staggering gravity of dissonance.
There is no great writer afraid of silence,
there is no sedative like white noise.

The Improvisational Past

I feel at home in the shadows,
though my skin's seen more sun.

The palpable is in this place &
The impalpable is a place
I will drink to later.

Remember when you asked me
why Puerto Rican women wear
so much jewelry, I said because
there is no worth like the white skin.

You called me a racist.
You said this is what's wrong you people,
you can't let go

That's certainly true:
But I'm told the past defines me.
The vague wind of tradition,
You're Stupid Cathedrals.
Do you have any idea how many people
tell me they are 1/16 Cherokee?
Really, it's nice to know someone
In your family has been oppressed,
but I can't help noticing that in Las Vegas
it's always brown people with little English
trying to hand me business cards for prostitutes.
A tiny *abuela* wearing three sweatshirts under
a red t-shirt that says we do everything.
Anything was probably one the first English
words they were told , how very American

And now I'm glad many get cancer from tanning.
That plastic diffraction. Those false faces
with their eyes still halo-ed by white.
True, there will be sunglasses.
I cannot expand enough on the sensitivity of the eyes. `

The complicated relationship of input and acceptance,
but I know there are people browning their skins like wearing a jacket
And I know nobody asks them who they are
What are you? Excuse me? Who are you?
What? No, I mean, where are you from?

What Am I going to do when I Run out of Shoes?

Think of the concrete,
concoction dunning solid.

What is wisdom
if not regret
made into helmets.
Though nobody can
hustle the truth
from kidneys.

The future is always
performed
with the mind,
and how
is that not
inexhaustible?

Show me
your arboretum.

Here, the wind
looks for the grief
it belongs to.
I'm not sure
everything
isn't made
of entering.
The yet greater
dark. Doors
suggesting
disquiet.

Meanwhile, someone writes a book titled: Our lives as Parabolas.
Meanwhile, someone writes a book titled: Thanks to Denial, I Am Immortal.

Where is the gravestone of time?

There is no difference
between infinity
and nothing at all?

IV.

Given Right

As if in another
world punishment
fits crime like
snug mittens.

Convenience or Death

All pride is propaganda
misused silence
and among the days
of installation
and cascading
it's device lies
maudlin and unmoved

Who expected speech
to leave the periphery?

I know in art they wear
their denouement
in the mien of peacocks
roaming freely staggered
in lit zoos,

But from what I see life rewards
life with life and that's it

It's understandable
grabbing

at what you can
with your hands,
like chlorophyll reaching
but

despite its ornament
equality does not exist

there is only the invention
of inequality

Incidence lies

like the argyle trees
in random autumn

What I'm trying to say is life
is merely the music
of what receives blood and air
not an arrival

there are no doors.

It's All Fun and Games Until Someone Mentions Poverty.

How:
it makes buckets
of people. The minutia
of struggling
fiscally, the weight
of time and
fatalism.

What if I told you my
mother
was a butler
once?

That she swept
the halls of this
dim mansion.

cleaning both
what was lived
in as well as the many empty
rooms left over.

Usually:
The family
assumed the rooms
never got dirty
because they were
never lived in.

We'd Rather See Their Faces Filled With Flies.

Obviously chaos has a basement
and wind well, let's just say there
is a pressure and everything buckles
under it eventually. Even eventually.

I want to say it's not all decay,
but what is growth if not the decay
of something else.

Having is a pulpit. The congregations
are needed for posture. The conversations
need to be fleeting. If we are talking
real water and real glass, the glass is always
half empty unless it started full and how
many glasses start full?

Glass is lonely by design.

The Shouting, the Tragedy and the Waste

I.

Authority or oppression, who spellchecks the paper work?

Not that uniforms don't make escalators
of people or that nametags aren't validated by mortality
but that law is flawed. Duct tape and garbage bag windows.

The suppression of uncomfortable realities.
The lakey obstetrics of billboards.
The fetid petty of speaking stone to stupid.

Imagine the pressure of citizens who have to hold it together.

The rigid stones that fill the stomachs of officers that
have to pat the thighs and pockets of populations too scared
to just die

What it must take to contain the muck architecture of
civil.

....

Again with the gunfire,

not submission, residential genuflecting.

The sordid laziness of bureaucracy,
or how quickly things become atavistic. About anger,
not particular to any such person or moment
but an amalgam of the impacting of reality.

II.

Right:

Either way
it's a pedestal
you made.

Wrong:

Chaos
is the gift
of existence.

III.
Your honor,

*We have
rehearsed
our enemies.
Their minds
are young
and inexhaustibly
choreographed.
Poverty is a choice
yet no one chooses it.*

*We used to make things.
Now we just have our hand
in the next guy's pocket.
There is a line between
the decline of industry
and the paucity and fraud
of public education*

Oh the equivocations!

*With all-due respect,
your honor, do you really
think this man chose the back
door? Illegal il-legal
Illegality... illegality
I emphasize
the formality because
that's really the issue
here, in this building,
that gavel and that bench
Your honor, this man
has never met you in his life
and yet he, like the rest
of us, stood upon your arrival,
and let me say, your honor,*

*your black robe was as intimidating
as it was luxurious, the dark
pendulum cloth of it reminded
me of a child putting its hands
over its eyes how it both blinds
and protects almost paradoxically.*

Judge: Is there a point here?

*I'm sorry, your honor,
did you think this man
works for pain,
that he purposefully
leaches on the weight
of what it takes to shoulder
the ache and pay of labor?
Does this courtroom
really believe this man
wants the disintegration
of progress, that he works
on the side of violence?
When did we stop seeing
survival as self-defense?*

*My client did not invent
the demand for endorphins.*

My client is not the only one needing.

*Ladies and Gentlemen of the
jury, you are inventing sides.
Convict is a demographic,
and there are no blurred lines.*

To The Mother with the Pond Eyes and the Purple Velour Tracksuit

A child who has not yet grown
into to his large face looks up
at his mother who looks down
at her knees or perhaps the empty
tiled floor.

I imagine this kid gets on a soapbox:

I'm starting to believe
you chose to have me
so that you could feel
significant, so that, for once
you could tell someone else
how it is. Was it meaning?
that you had hoped to birth?
Should you be admired
now that I am your identity,
because now you can ignore
what is wrong outside of your
own family?

Your political stance is child safe,
as if to say if I cannot define it thinly
to my children, it is wrong. Is censorship
the projection of your own struggle
with give and take?

The suburbs we live in is an illusion.
A reference to an order that is as inhuman
as it is symbolically lying. Conformity
is the language of the already slaughtered.

The most important thing is an open mind
That's why it is the only thing I was born with.
Loving me doesn't make you right about anything.

The soapbox is gone; though our minds never get to leave it
This mother is talking too loudly to her phone.

A Performance Artist and the Heterodyne Principle

When he started he just stood there silent, staring at the crowd who in reaction were looking away at their cell phones, at each other, awkward, clearly waiting, which had art to it. The music of the audience of John Cage. Waiting is what we learn first as living things. Autonomical metronomes aside, he then started writing letters aloud to the crowd. First, it was the paternal nouns. Dear Father, you taught me to be a clever doormat.

Then his letters were addressed to ideas; Dear Freedom, How do you deal with purpose? Dear Integrity, your shirt is stupid. Then he took off all of his clothes and started bombarding a large woman in the front row with insults. I see you prefer your chairs with no arms he said. Then he put on a plastic cop uniform, stabbed an abnormally large badge into his chest, went back to the heavy woman, and yelled several times, *you kids break it up*. He took a picture of her and commented repeatedly on how long it was going to take to print.

Most of the audience was laughing but guilt hung in the air. The artist demonstrated this by spelling the word out on a chalkboard with his feces. Eventually, the smell spread and the audience realized what was being smeared in front of them. They started to boo, some started to leave. In apropos he began throwing cardboard puzzle pieces at the audience and the audience leaving. Some started to throw the pieces back at the artist, others started trying to find pieces that fit together. And through the loud censures of "I think

I found an end piece" Still others did nothing but watch. Then people dressed as ghosts, or people with sheets covering their bodies, brought a small desk to the stage where the artist sat down, and to display the savage and lazy nature of human existence he shoved a large metal pencil through his thigh into the desk chair, binding the two, then with his hands, one covered in shit, the other with blood, he started to play the Theremin the ghosts had just brought on stage . Normally this would hinder a musician, but the artist's hands entered and left the magnetic fields surrounding the Theremin antennae with such grace you forgot he wasn't playing the Theremin the whole time, scoring the film of that experience or at least that's how it will be remembered and though the Theremin was broadcasting to itself, the audience felt as if it was singing to them, at first in an eerie dark place way, but then when his hand started trembling the electricity became voice and one couldn't help but imagine an opera house, projection and large women thundering electric. He could have still been making fun of the large women in the front row, but nobody noticed, not her nor the bleeding, which with the trembling was puddling much faster, only the music, and it sounded like it was infinite, like all of time was inhabited by this music, by this/these moments, now.

V.

The Paradox of Overcoming and at the Same Time Preserving

You could lie and say I lost myself
and considering our lives are spent
mostly with descriptions of parts
without thought or awe for the whole,

Someone would believe you
and say welcome back to the path
we all lose our center time to time.

It's easy to imagine logic as that road
extending towards something
adamant, perhaps overwhelming.

Show me freedom without pressure
and I will show you thin but determined
strings hanging things nicely
in a place that would make you
believe privilege sits in bone.

If History Was A Blimpy Hooker, Would You Call Him Maxamillion?

To summarize the sky
humanity is a basement.
The stadium reagents the loam
lame with not-having.

The pageant of earning
scatters the roaches
of broken so the eyes,
can lie to the idea of a heart.
An excuse for stupidity
and the joke of not needing.

Why does the moon make meat of us?
Because everyone says it does.
World's oldest ceiling?
Everything happens for a reason.
Dr. Staircase what is the seating chart?
Who pulls the dark tarps apart?

Poem Under No Illusion of Itself Being Howl

I haven't seen the best minds of my generation at all.
Muted in traffic, immigrant, madness like the rest of us,
Moving like cogs into each other, dragging not only
the teeth of the past but the warm metal channel
of the present, bone faced televangelists evangelizing
dollar fists mistakenly docile for the purposes of prayer
or applause, who look creatively for anything that
resembles pleasure or the conversation of attainable goals,
or the unreliable rain of euphoria, or the cascading tremble
of Montana I have seen the best minds of my generation punch
each other with diapers. I have seen shit crows whose music
would remind you of linoleum, who reserve tables at lukewarm
who belong to long buildings and the solitude of repetition,
who passed slowly through universities with lurid degrees
in brick and silence, who are flowering poverty in the smoke
darkness of their trophies, who masturbate constantly at
the networking prospects of post-modernism, who
writhe in the grass of passivity, who threw beauty
at the page when everyone was looking at the screen,
who were too scared to fight for the obscene or any of the
lesser known odes, whose music slowly became more plastic,
who cowered in the towers, in the constant mall of capitalism,
whose nicotine teeth speak loudly to the nature of rest, who relax
in the semblance of middle living, who drink the piss and giggle
of Richard Nixon. Who, still, seek whatever measures are necessary
to nullify the emptiness of ownership, who are still ignorant
of the brutal taxes of convenience, who were stamped for laughs,
who took some sick pride in the pigeon-holing, who continually
mistake new for good, and old for sacred, who stood like pin holes in the screen light,
camera obscuras, at first entertaining but eventually just
poorly organized photography, incomparable blind streets
of poorly draped slip-covers that pretty over and continually
suffocate the tattered couches of time, who live in cul-de-sacs of
unnecessary shade, drinking the fat syrup of a white washing,
who stand blanched by the segmented light of closed windows
by the relevant greed of manifest destinies, who experience
distance without ever moving, whose walls are mental,
who swallow the comeuppance, a fist down their thick throat.
who chained themselves to the idea of themselves, unweaving
the latticework of actual galaxies into reweaved retarded sweaters
skipping narcotic pebbles of modern love across the rippling ocean
of unregistered pain, who were arrested in the cloth of the proletariat
silent like the governed eventually lost beneath the black and white
of stretched paperwork, who bought books already sold to the machinery

of the tepid, who talked endlessly under the sinew and autonomy
of museum speech on the contradictions of worth, bulimic intellect
meandering in the recursive pools of politics and corporation,
who can find no privacy under the delicate hum of satellites
protracting the skies, who refuse to not be entertained waiting
for life to look like that pamphlet, who made music
for treading water, in studios of lacking palpable rhythm, who
worked liberal days to pay the infinite rent of class with their paychecks
of buckets, who threw attention at the cause without any idea
of its velocity, who dream of personal drugs, who dream of
impersonal salvation, cock and absent balls, who fell to their
knees in cathedrals of misplaced humility, who watched it happen,
who cannot howl without a voice, or the recognition of the voiceless,
the silence that gave it legs, who cannot even finish this poem,
because this the body politic of brevity, this is the nation of default white blinds,
this is the gaggle of the willing, this is the citizenry of sheep,
and in the republic of sheepery there is no room for the poetry of the wolf

The World as Will and Representation

The clouds are sepia oatmeal.

I didn't say it was the thunder
that scared me as a child it was
the distance between the lightning
and the boom. Time is suffering.
It was the clarity of waiting,
the lean forward. Now, it reminds
me of this quote you gave me:
'Talent hits a target no one else can hit
Genius hits a target no one else can see'
Which means the smartest among us
see no targets at all . Still, it was the walls
that were comforting, with the ceiling,
it was the opposite of *target*. Except
to the lighting, or for anything that can be bombed.

I'm not sure what's worse greed or
the illusion of safety but it's becoming
impossible to feel anything. Do you
remember when you told me you
thought banana won the lottery
of artificial flavors and I wanted to say
that it was simply the natural evolution
of the close relationship to man and banana,
but I was thinking of terrible luck
and I couldn't see the tease of gravity
or the interchangeability of *time* and *decay*
and not think that certain people are born
fucked more than others, and to counteract
the gut-plummet of that sadness, I thought
again about you and how love is the multiple
tasks of hands, then I thought about how far
that reaches, which initially brought to mind
contracts, but we always knew to see through
them, they impact only filing. I thought
we could be an example, we could show
everyone time is on suffering's side, and
the answer is always love and more hands.

World's Shortest Book: Revenge Fantasies of Emotionally Healthy People

I know you're uncomfortable
with catharsis,
but what you meant
to say about the movie
is that it moved you.
When they abducted
that man's daughter
you started to feel it,
somewhere in the curtains
of your stomach. A more
extraordinary *déjà vu*.
The durability of mood.

But let's not miscarry rage,
energy and its tension
you felt a justified wrath,
the butter of vindication
and lost property. Vengeance
is the diarrhea of reactions.

In the crowd you could
hear people shouting:
If this was my daughter...
Oh the things I would do...
I wish someone would...

As if the retributions
would be beautiful.
As if people would be
impressed by the passion.
In the movie, you could tell
he really loved her because
he killed so many people,
and so creatively.
It was practically dancing.
Except she didn't see it
and it actually was dancing,
which should make the whole thing
ridiculous, but that's not the story.

There is no morality without storytelling.
Empathy needs it, and the film went after
rage through that bridge.
The ludicrous power of what

if it happened to you.

If it were this poem selling you
Something simpler it would say
every living human is born with
Three things: Rage, love, and an empty
mind with a panoply of continually
changing systems of absorption.

Rage, I'm convinced,
is essential to transcendence
It's how we get from
the kinetic. It says I am
alive and that is work.
It is the constant metronome.
It is survival, and thus
it is wind in our bones.

Love is not an expression
of rage, or the violence
your willing to commit
in the name of family,
it is the tedious negation
of that, and that's why
nobody left the movie thinking
about the love that was
expressed when the man
finally reached his daughter,
who was tied to a chair,
not that climax, but the fight
scenes, people were talking
about the inspired ways
they would defend something
they loved, they left looking
for evil to test them, everyone
left with plenty of testosterone
walking with confidence
in the parking lot, talking
to each other about maybe
joining the military.

VI.

Through The Clock

Look consciousness
nothing is still.

Nights are not separate.

Blood walks through the water clock.

Through.

Time is neither the clock nor your pain.
If you leave you will leave nothing
but your difference.

Ice to a diamond.

Let Us Say Internal Dialogue

Why it should happen like this I am not sure, but I'm sitting at a bar,
The man sitting next to me asks,

If I ever wish (sometimes) for more than just this limp time.

He makes this gesture with his hand holding his glass, waving it irregularly
in the air as he speaks, trying in his way to represent the chaos and tumult of life
I nod and take a drink from my glass.

What do you do with music he asks.

The music was loud and nobody was dancing.

I guess a pivot for my silence I say, putting my glass down onto the bar.

He puts his drink down, and asks me what I think of love.

Love is the persistence of vision, the only tangible faith.

he takes another drink from his glass,
puts his arm around me and says

We should always doubt gods and purpose.

I say, *when we mention god let us say internal dialogue*, raising my glass in the motion of
toast.

Don't forget the childishness of suicide he says.

We both nod and take a drink from our glasses.

You and I, he says, *we are products of an unnamed distance.*

He orders another drink.

I'm glad to have met someone as smart as you are he says.

You wear the performance of speech like a scarf around your cold throat

pointing his new drink in my direction.

Would you like another he asks, I say no, *I think I've had enough.*

I really only understand the smash and grab of social interaction when I'm inebriated

he says. *We are all the same in the drunk-dark of places like this.*

Tetragrammaton

The stars have
already been used

and still we ebb

As distance.
From where
We were

Growing
like dandelions
in between sidewalks

The clouds
looked like
nests of bone

Is that the real sky?

Christianity

Consistently history
reiterates you can
have faith in anything.

And while we are being
honest let us say
that its survival rests
in the exploited lonely
of people dying.

I will try to speak
for my generation
and say we were
born with this
on our backs

Were humans made
in the image of the original
or was our vanity thrown
to the clouds in a gospel of this
is the best we can do for now.

On The Death of David Foster Wallace

You have to wonder if he considered
his options, if his elaborate perspective
birthed a list that consisted of other
possibilities checked in pen as if saying,
these are just words, reality is old

and parading. I wonder if the future fell
heavily onto the bridge of his face. If in
his process of funneling his fiction he reflected
a staunch blackness that said now, artist
cannot be optimist. That said we as people
are footnotes, or maybe plagued with the criticism
that he was bad with endings he chose
a sentence without metaphor.

Maybe, the elegance of his fiction only
made the brick text of his life
seem hideous and thick.

I will remember the news of his death
because I realized art is the reaching of hands
That art is the absence of sides. A neutrality
that propagates from person to other person.
A music of chaos and remembering. It hurts though

#27 Why I Can't Talk to People

My flaws are clear
I do not understand
the industry of open faces.
Where are the bus
stops to these stoop
choirs? Ask me
about the weather
I will tell you how it
reminds me of memory
Ghost meat. Knowledge the
garbage Texas,
I mean yes, lovely
If capitalism has taught me
anything it's that buildings choose
to be bulldozed, it's a choice
they make wanting more
than the upward destitution
of owning. Stop it, genius
To grow on the wrong
side of progress is to pay
for the mistakes you made as a fetal self.
You could've been born better,
time works like that. Look
we were talking about bargain
shoes you ruin everything
with your thinking. Your cup
is full but trust me it yearns
for quarters! Change chain-tamed
dog paths. Walk weighted dead grass.
Leave the speeches please and you
can come in with us. Stop calling the ether
indecisive look at all the beautiful body parts
see how they don't want meaning.

VII.

New Title of this Poem:

Darkness is the Traffic of Crows

Do not underestimate
the intelligence of crows,
they are both janitors
and darkness, they owe nothing
to the raven. The crows are cautious
because they are planes
and thus concerned,
like most of us, with traffic.

We are both dirt.

New Title of this Poem:

Time Cancels Itself

The best way to control
people is to encourage
them to be mischievous.
The deliquesce luxury
of time, an introduction
to void, what we have
here are experiments
for the replacement
of boredom.

Time is not money
it is a glass bowl
that can be filled
with money,
but you can't trust
the money or the bowl
so you are left
with emptiness.

New Title of this Poem:

The Disgusting Luxury of Sadness

And so we are left
with both darkness
and emptiness, really
the most beautiful
things in the world.
Both nothing

and everything
at the same time;
Schrodinger's Cat,
the magnetism
of closed doors.

Guilt is lingerie,
which to me is
getting in the way,
but people love
presentations
and none of us
can ignore the void,
so there is never a time
when you aren't considering
something worth purchasing.

New Title of this Poem:

The Disgusting Luxury of Language

I envy the crow and its lack of baggage.

Due Partly to Inertia

All day my body burdens
deployed to void with grin to watch laughingly.
I let the schadenfreude out actually. The pain dazzles me
Not the slaughter houses histories I want no part of
Anyone who wants to be a martyr is already a dick
Legend, roofied by bullets, collapses in front of them
like bodies been shot, several medals given
to several men. Pageantry you win. Because I can't
compete with explosions, or how easy it is
to shoot and get shot. Exploding is how stars die and we can't
get over that. I chose not to think of myself as a flesh pocket
but more as the electricity I sometimes feel in my blood.

Oh,

but the world is cold and flaunting and space
is expanding at all points and in all directions so you see so from
where I stand I am actually the center of the universe.
This is consciousness, the who's who of brutal truths.
And so you're always moving away from me.
Sedulous in a way I desperately hope to explain. But I've learned
I can't trust mine, nor anyone else's. This burden birthed gods
Because you can lose it because nobody can hold onto any reality
but their own, and you can lose it. Memory dissipates if it doesn't
haphazardly create in the first place. Just before they signed the papers
to let me out of the mental hospital the doctor told me you're smart
and that's going to be a problem for you. And still today I can remember
how she looked at me, but I will forget it, possibly in another mental institution
Possibly in a room talking to toasters and chairs, while my wife cooks for me
and resents me for losing it, because she is trying so hard not to drop it herself
because she regrets marrying me regularly, because at some point when
she would ask me if I wanted to have sex I started replying If there's a piccolo there
I'm out, and I always walked away with confidence (wearing disillusion like a sweater)
wearing
a sweater. Because I started blanking out at funerals, and getting scared when the soldiers
would shoot the sky in the stomach for a now dead soldier friend because funerals
are about dirt. Memory, shmemory, burden for dirt. Strenuous bridges build traffic, a
traffic that will eventually collapse said built bridges. The fractal architecture makes no
room for minds only the traffic that rotates until it doesn't, exploding or whatever.

Tarantulas Leave Behind Footprints of Silk

During the day homeless
share the shadow of trees
or litter the streets of Las
Vegas blvd playing drums
for quarters he didn't even
have a kick drum though
some people just have cups
maybe hats. Heavy with their many jackets
sometimes they hold signs
88.8 percent of the time
the sign ends in god bless
you for some reason it
bothers me it should say god
blessed you but I hate the
word god it's a yacht
when I hear god I hear I can't
control the universe.
With, for sure.

I think they think
they earned the right to have
not been born to a crack head
or to parents dead or among
congregations of debt or tire heaps
of underclass

my footprints are worn rubber soles
shoes daisy-chained replaceable
where those gun shots or someone being
patriotic I'm not sure but I'd rather not
go inside unless people congregate
the sidewalks and stare believable-ish
at me for being outside and not walking
the trees are self-centered and pampered
with garbage the tethered metal birds
hum and piss glow

it relaxes me
the sound of things getting done
in the darkness the gypsy pigeons
are up to something incorporate
but my porch faces the sidewalk
and my sidewalk is a conduit
a middle place between two

separate parking lots and when
our eyes meet there is dissemblance
I continue with my cigarette so at
least they know I can control fire
I have to say I don't understand
the pageantry of respect respect
which is an acknowledgment
of constructions First dignity, then empathy
then respect then hopefully a waffle
or some vodka, who cares
if it's night we have light bulbs and naps
in a bar the music is loud because it renders
conversation symbolism and what with
the women drinking for free let's wait
in line so we can have something to hold while
we stand or just sit there who else wants
to get closer to the ground more open
to the ambiguities of beauty and appropriate
ness the drunker the louder the more vertigo
more needed will somebody please just fuck
the shit out me I want to know I have a body
tonight my mind is quiet and I like it
I am somehow tranquilized down without
tradition let's turn the lights out it's cinnamon
guilt we'll turn back on the lights when you're
well wet and bioluminescent. We could go
to the porch later let the night make you
feel like a nebula but people should be walking
home from the bar soon and they'll stare
at us or be surprised at the not walking
why not face the chairs the other way
who wants to stare at a door

The Floors are also Ceilings

I'm up to debt in memory,
I want to leave this room.
Call all doors
 sympathy.

 Exhalation
best after leaving,
see manual.
See the cruxes.
See how the sky divides
by itself.

Decay now, authority
is changing lanes,
memory lied
 about the lanes
In the first place. Time taught in trophy

Capital radiates
from the bought closets
inside the buyable chests
were hearts are wanting absence.

Language worn like it owes you.
Trickle down metaphysics
It's the resources that fucked you.

If I'm anything you're an army
of contexts.
The great body fishtank
burdened by flukes, blame the bottom
lobsters. Feed on weakness, live forever
but be resented

Consumption. Always. Sexuality.

What to do
with the left over sea,
men?
Praise it, I am not clapping sarcastically.
I'm not fapping dramatically,
this is a poem about consumption.
Something I never do, I am the resource

I am the resource. I am the trophy,
Who wants me? I will verify your decision
making.

Don't worry

I have your hips,
this is a poem about equilibrium.
Nothing on ownership, I'm positive
it's not a thing, though it builds exits,
roads, cities built on get off my lawn.

It helps with the lights out,

I'm flattered by distance.
So think about something
you regret? Take your shirt off,
this is a poem about demand.

The body walks for it,
stay laid down

Don't think about assets.
Stroke your cage like religion tells
the poor to do.

Steeple.

Forgive my ignorance
my limits are learned, so you know
they're the most ~~real~~ gravity.
Yup, we are falling now, note how
my tie is now a noose and your skirt
is covering your face and arms.

Blame us we are the victims

we are the faces of the problem,
this is a poem about not knowing the utopia
and how it keeps wanting consecutive
pastries . Delicious, delicious pre-regret.

Everything I was ever told
you wanted. Do not question what
are the resources, this is a poem

About taking.

All the escalators are stacked caskets,
your welcome for the convenience.

Perception: Soul Donkey

If I can't look at you in the eyes
I guess it's because I think your soul is ugly.
Except that the soul is a lie, right.
Nothing more than wanting a superber pulpit
Each mind a failure at being a stone.
Dull lulling, near actioneering
if perception is a house it can go fuck itself full

Outside the concrete is petty, the street lamps are light pregnant
and I have never seen eyes so dilated,
I could get lost in them, sea-deep like blood still in the body's drum kit.
I cannot see any of the stars that think they are better than me.

Perception you're pear shaped.
Your pasture made of Kansas,
streets walking backwards like
maintenance; power's power
calendars drooping with interference.
Your face is the enemy of music.

The soul is a straw man
absence misunderstood, the underestimation of nothing.
Let's talk about were silence gets its comfortable,
the mortal euphoria of letting go.
Where time gets its large apartment
of what you are not.
Perception is the doorman in this place
and you wouldn't dare look this person in the face.
Mostly because their head is down
and everyone is so full of theater.
What was is it the night said about getting
more comfortable with your insignificance?
What was it about trees trying to be buildings?
Vivid with the invalid venting of good for now
perception still wants names. Me, yes well
I'm a poet call me drum machine
you can call all the people parking lots.

The Self is a Victimless Crime, Like Punching a Stranger in the Dark

There is darkness everywhere
you just can't see it because the sun is such an attention whore.

Either way,
I am a camera
which is to say
I am also an audience.
The sky is all
genital. Gravity
wants horizontal.
I am all consumption,
need made vertical
by teeth that grew
architecture. So
we as aquariums
could experience
the lies of silence.
The empty and
distorted porches
of self. I do not
believe in originality,
it's the uniform that changes faces.
All instrument,
nothing like a subway.

I Too Hate Ars Poetica

If we're not
Translating grief
crying with no need
for translation.

We're music
or laughing
or still dying.

She's still
dying. Well
if she's alive
her mortgage
is overdue.

Listen, what
do you want
from me? How
do you not
understand
this? I remember
telling my mother
not to worry
it's not
like they'll start
showing
the house
to people
looking to own
if only for a while
but the hospice
all that beeping
equipment

“aaand here's the bed
room, try
to imagine
all these
machines
and scattered
family and
that woman
dying gone
they all have
wheels

don't worry,
this could be
maybe
an office
maybe a room
for family
addition
I don't want
to make any
speculations"
We couldn't
put her in the master
bedroom,
what with the bed
she came
with a bed
and it has wheels
so they could still
look at the master
we don't really use
the bed, it's covered
in luggage and I didn't
say this to my mom
so either way
the word stay
is inappropriate
and not what
anyone was thinking.
If not for sympathy
than for fear
of ridicule?
The nurse alone
I mean we
would all be
thinking about
the future but
the real future
the death one
and you and I
know that sells
houses but listen
anyone who
puts in
a lawn sign
will get cut
with it, and

no she can't
come to the phone,
why would
I give her
the phone?
Hang up
just hang
up I would
urge anyone
on the phone
with that look
after a while
I just started
hanging the phone
up for everyone,
because we
were all given
jobs I remember
I was in charge
of the phone.

Q: A:

What is this poem about?

The misrepresentation of doors.

No really?

Perhaps it is about perspective.

Is that important to you?

I imagine it is all I have.

What does that say about poetry?

Humanity is mostly noise.

Is this poem beautiful?

In the prize's eye, the less reliable windowframe.

What is more important than beauty?

Catalyst.

Why Is this poem not a sonnet?

Why is your face not a sonnet?

Are you angry with me because this poem isn't about anything?

Emptiness is a mule.

I don't think that's true.

I 'm a fly on a window.

How is the life of the fly?

Like smoke that ribbons into oblivion.

Curriculum Vitae, Justin Irizarry

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