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The Watchmaker Series

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THE WATCHMAKER SERIES

by

Christopher Michael Seelie

Bachelor of Arts
College of William and Mary
2007

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the

**Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing
English Department
College of Liberal Arts
The Graduate College**

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas
December 2011**



THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the thesis prepared under our supervision by

Christopher Michael Seelie

entitled

The Watchmaker Series

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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December 2011

ABSTRACT

The Watchmaker Series

by

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Prof. Claudia Keelan, Examination Committee Chair
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The Watchmaker Series celebrates and inquires into time as a biproduct of consciousness and practices the application of this notion in poetry. The series begins with the numeral poems, all of which relate directly to the theoretical and polemical aspects. Along the way, other poems with individual titles are interspersed to reflect or redirect the abstract considerations to more concrete subjects. Gradually, as the series progresses, the interacting and recurring associations meld theory and practice into a compositional whole.

The central notion that contemporary poetry is not a machine made of words but rather, like the watch that gives itself as evidence of the existence of a watchmaker, each poem is a watchmaker presents the poet as a watchmaker who makes watchmakers instead of watches, having dispensed with the utility of language in favor of its creative impulse.

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1.1

groups of bacteria have existed on this earth longer than any other organism

as individuals

not a success story

natural selection lacks all intention

once an end is assumed, life collapses

into a waiting game

when will all of creation gather in the parlor room

so God can tell us whodunit

appearance of intent arises from hindsight

math behind genetics doesn't account for the radical change

between Cro-Magnon

and the 21st century human gene code

Beauty

the expressive force that compelled even more selective breeding

from beauty, selective became downright exclusionary

a consensus that is unnatural

in a sense

evil

and good

and, knowledge, though it causes hardship

or occurs concurrently to it

Nature strives toward complexity

crossing a heath pitched my feet

a foot catches a stone and I fall

God bless the devil

is on the earth and

doing his job wonderfully

how the stone came to be there I can only assume

a watch upon the ground could have been there

the watch must have had a maker

(Did the maker know that it was a watch?)

an artificer

must love most what is artificial

in time the heavens tell

of God's glory and the firmament
declares his handiwork

1.2

watches do not make
themselves—
animals do

complexity does not preclude design
entirely unintentional one keeps time by this watch
noticing the passage of words
minutes
life by the line

1.3

Adapt or Die is a Complex
the improbable begs to be believed
the impossible is self evident

is anything too hard for the eternal
Sarah laughs
as rockface becomes beachhead
becomes stony surf

and sand before washing out
to sea

the only way to speak to the eternal is face to face

women speak to each other in confidence

a quail crosses oceans to exhaust itself on the breeze

a campfire feeds the stolen means

to a deserted people

who thank the breeze

1.4

Were it all to begin with a lie—

Let there be.

be but the end in of itself

a swallow's nest at the feet

I've seen a happy prince before the reef

I've seen story and light

Summer is Greco-Modern: naked and soulless under such intensity.

Dots accumulate like poppies of the lace.

Fields bloodied are wiped away clean.

It is a tradition, you see, to make English of these things.

The queer spin reacts to the wall, not the ball in its path.

The lonely light makes monsters of us all,

grasping for one another and coming up

with nothing at all.

It is impolite to stare.

We are impolite. We stare.

Making Excuses

Loud: Set the god on right

Aside: Left to his own devices

a watchmaker comes to life

it is not Adam; it is not Eve

it bodes no ill-will and hasn't a garden to leave

Interior: The watchmaker sees a beachhead and doesn't hear a storm

Loud: The beach is merely revealed

Aside: No ritual must ensue

Loud: Set the godhead on right and watch a world spurn its own telling

Aside: The show starts up instead

the wasteland stays dead

what may be used

is used

Exterior: A click and a shore but what more can be said when the watchmaker

is well fed, well read, bred to be homo faber and a sentient sapien aping the tide?

Loud: In his head, watch plans

out his mouth, song

There is a God in my details,

and another one in my truths.

There is hindsight in my intentions.

My intentions are quickly misplaced.

There is a demon in my closet and a rat in my throat.

I am waking too fit to cough.

There is a Mars in my mind and a Venus in my loins.

I have loins in my poems and genitals in my texts.

There are phallus signs everywhere and then it is Tuesday.

My lily blooms on the balcony over which I can see

anima peeking out from behind my analyst.

There is a God in my generalities and a God in my mistakes.

There is a devil in my desires and an angel in their satisfaction.

Stillness rains on my battlefields.

Dynamos gather in my waiting room.

I hear tax collectors every time I drink too much

and coffee sharpens my garden.

2.0

and even you, the beauty and entrapment of my soul

even you are not so worrisome

the loss of water means only surplus for another elsewhere

visit me often

I'd like to say

I know now

entrapment ends

the interruption is negligible

the fighting will always reconvene elsewhere

the globe is covered in firecrackers

I shoot off

a rocket

for science

in my youth

the house has been sold

winter is coming on the brush of leaves that skip across the lawn

in the light of a football

Harvest Moon

the rocket fuel
burns bright
and short from its back end

the nose points elsewhere and I raise my fists in triumph
youth sold and on the go to a new towhead revisiting
could bucktooth his smile but for the future braces
retaining a lost nothingness
that has refracted
into a difference machine
a Waking dream

my heart knows the possible chance that rockets make silence
out there with Haley's Comet
the result could be disastrous or another disaster that cuts heads for a kiss
lips relinquish tongues
the voluptuousness is not so secondhand
after all
even the maidens
have swoon in its arms
Come on a bird's wing
It sings
It dances

retold tales are an adventure seen many times before you

2.1

Following

the hunter

and his wife

who blocks

the moonlight

from sight

a journey

will begin

at the other end

no Destination awaits

its own beginning

Homo Ludens – Homo Faber

This poem is observing itself being made.

It can tell that the most mechanical usage
break down
to its advantage

This poem is unironical in its absolute acceptance of its condition.

It is no machine until it is made of words instead of notions.

Passing from watchmaker
to watch
its own fossil
ization

The watch is a testament to the hour of its inception.

Rewound, it can only count to where it began and then again
again
proceed in its testament—
Once I was, now I am.

Soon enough I had hours to keep me busy.

An even dozen.

I liked those hours and so I had a dozen more and called it a day.

I was bushed, so I burned up and again the watch went around
the hour; I call it a pattern and the poem does too.

It says it right there.

from watchmaker to daylight
and waves on the beach among the tiniest stories
mark time's passage from above the hourglass

To its bottom this making from the beat of a wave which is its own pattern...

There is a watch ergo
the watchmaker it once was
is past gone

in evidence the poem draws no conclusions

It can enjoy old ones and goodness knows the newest.

The music plays even as the other one says it's noise.

I prefer to hear music.

It is music.

-3.0 / 3.0

I once killed a callow that cawed at me in the tree's fingers.

It would clutch and sing as it squeezed the tree's fingers in hopes of sharing misfortune.

So I shot it out of grasp.

Ho, ho, axiomatic.

No, only easy, only so as to be in the way.

Leave it behind and know that the shallow make the most after a big wave.

Depths are for diving, quite fun, but not the way to find watches.

They do not grow in the soft and persistent clam's flesh.

The flesh that thinks nothing without it being what it is not.

It needn't think and may make a watch from the sand.

More likely, they were never washed ashore.

Found there miraculously like some harsh sound from a beautiful voice

so it is harsh and beautiful too.

Dwell upon the axiom, no.

Jumping out of the system makes it faber.

Made.

No, derived.

A property intelligence has by escaping a task.

Idle minds are not unobservant.

Prompting is sufficient, but marvelously made.

A dull sandwich and a callow sliding across the top of very deep water.

Deriving a Watchmaker

Defined as an explicit, line-by-line demonstration
of how to produce watches
according to the rules of a formal system. Modeled on proof.

The watchmaker is an austere cousin,
a distant
relation
that ships to other locales
the stuff which
I collect
along the beach
after a storm
a distant
relation
that ships home
new horizons
and their admirers

I have found the rarest cuts of fish
so red and tender
and juicy as to be
mistaken
for watermelon

I have learned to swim breaststroke in the air
to burst clouds into the cracking sidewalk pavement
that carries me to cities lacking order to improvise games of gold

golfing in the illustrious cathedrals
where the hopeful come to pray
and the vaulted ceilings echo the classic rock station
coming from a stereo on the tenement window

I have derived a watchmaker in the beautiful
terms of a bed sheet, where mountain rock face
is envisioned
the future of a small business
and the rocks choose not to fall
or to fall
and be otherwise engaged in commerce
mixing with the quality to make a metaphor or save a race

Two girls start by applying “mud” to their faces.

The scare quotes are for linden berry,

raspberry leaves, papaya,

cinnamon, wheatgrass and

leavings.

These are some of the things to be found in “mud”.

The girls talk as the mud dries.

They start to notice cracks

appear near the jawbone,

cheeks ridge,

and where their eyes have been to make crow’s feet.

Each could say: I saw her age.

Each came to see the older face that dried and chipped until underneath showed the new.

It was a good face. The one they had left behind, once before all that, and improved.

It showed through, the skin looked fresh and new.

It is an inherent property

of intelligence that it can jump out of a task

which it is performing, and survey
what it has done; it is always
looking for,
and often finding,
patterns.

The equation never met one imaginary
mistaken for its better brother or twin sister
left clinging to a raft
the fashion is under
permafrost review
it seems
and so I have been condemned to walk the earth for a certain length of time
all of space couldn't clear out the wandering fool head would say
a perfect perfection is childish like a bunch of bananas
the ways of trains seem serious from a distance
quandaries
and a bottle broken
before the mast
so the boson can make junipers follow the crew to a new hand
where we are
only the finest cannibals can roam

Painted Diamond

All gone and thru the looking
I can see that her dress is new
It is a new dress and a sight to see
She says each of its names
I ask what they mean and I hear
a princess from Belgium and daughter of Jews
She was one of us, a you
Chosen once is twice in selection
so her taste was legendary
and now she has a her I say the
her she always wanted without it
is her that wraps around her bare
breasts perfectly
It is a her that covers
her thighs in wooly love, silken embrace
It is like a painted diamond
a stroller at a race
It has been so it shall remain
my love has been *like* and *as*

whereas her's *has been*

It likes to hold her close

gives itself fully the way a lover should

Some people dress for success

and others wear simply or for less

My love has seen a whisp

her glory

more or less is that she knows to dress

for this holiday, this occasion that calls

for so many kinds

Each one seeking a powerful token that

keeps above mere excess

A true

perfection requires nothing

lest there be angels summoned at such bequest

as to bring summer into spring

that makes a martyr tree breed

Taught Us: A Kill Ease

you must accept the first to continue to the second

from there it is turtles and gravy

all the way around

each second ticks by at exactly one second

they accrue

one second becomes two and so on until

the distance is marked for convenience

ages pass it got late

the ease at which we forgot did us that favor and no other

everything was paid in full view

a killing needn't be so instructional

the streets fall away in the autumn breeze

the whole world is sold up

there is more to be made

add in fit them out like the warrior is the hare

and there is pressing business at the bank

Poem

the mathematician is awestruck discovering two things that he knows
a bolt from the blue has tightened his grasp
his reason holds firm as the globe
continues to bank left and he's aright onto the new Enlightenment
where syphilic visions are answered by colors and turns in speech
that put the debating societies to shame so they are alike
and let the feather rain drip complacent to the thunder cry
a storm needs painting
an antelope is stuffed into the curiosity cabinet
to surprise the company
a prototype for recess
the defects have their advantages
it's a two tiered statement
leave one monkey to die by traders
or risk the other one in the deal

Liberation by M.C. Escher

the orientation will suppose gravity is on its side

from such an angle, the limits are left

to the sky filled with birds

they start as ghosts arriving ahead of the triangle

the square

they multiply exponentially

and diversify in the break up

divers and song birds

separation causes everything to fly

the hope persists on its side that gravity takes no part

as the lithograph goes rolling

to fold itself up

that way the complex is last and the void is elsewhere

not wrapped up in the unrolling that mist pass the pattern

marking to a name

and a date saved

in the fired, unreachable corner

The Mosaic by M.C. Escher

Who thought that a drugstore would be some day queen?

It's entirely possible that I've missed the question that started off a series of likenesses.

These go stumbling in the dark until they are white and near.

Dragons and

goldfish and

camels and

elephants and

demons and

devils and

the guitar

are there.

All this fun after the blackest bugs land on my collarbone.

I guess the ceiling wouldn't hold with them

or sleep seemed inevitably ruined and the wish to dream of falling

overcame what ruin the air so cool this time.

The idea would be pure; do you remember ideas?

They were those important things that used to precede manifestation.

A pine wood memory burns hotter.

4.0

I read somewhere meaning begins
when the symbols
of a formal system
correspond
to some truth
or known portion
of reality.

Words have active meaning
because like all
new ones
it brings into being
a new rule
for creating sentience.

This means
our command is not like a finished product.

The rules for making
sentences increase
when we learn
new meanings.

Our Meaningful Interpretation

derive from looking at well-formed strings

any interpretation of

symbols in a formal system will be meaningful

to the extent that it corresponds

to some truth in reality

different aspects are isomorphic

to each other, one single formal system can be isomorphic

to both

and so take on two passive meanings

Therein lies our clue to knowing a good line

a grammatic sound

literally

possibly

innovative

“Can all of reality be turned into a formal system?”

They sure are trying. And in a very broad sense, yes.

One could suggest, for instance, that reality is itself

nothing but one

very complicated

formal system.

Its symbols do not move on paper, but rather in a three dimensional vacuum called space.

They are the elementary particles of which everything is composed.

The sole axiom is

or perhaps was

the original configuration of all the particles at the beginning of time.

Does the universe operate deterministically?

Realities Misbehave

silliness intrudes on numbers
clean and pure, they bend to dialect
when spoken and break into thoughtful
children when Sunday afternoon trickles
by the brook in which they cannot play
they ought not and they do
this is the ideal and so are they thoughtful
remove clouds and the whole hill becomes prime
my love is typical of real mathematics:
simple, compelling, and beautiful
it has no prime
it is greater than itself and can be divided up as needed
it lasts long past the general my love has become
an imaginary truth no more meaningful
than the last
its interpretation is left up and working bottom up it can be seen
flying in the air my love is isomorphic
and tells its tale in an infinitely diverse
collection of its aspects my love is

ambiguous, clean, and likely to make
parallels on the bed or in the shower
and anywhere it pleases my love
can get around infinitely like a luxury
sedan it has the pick and the process
to get by natural numbers and escape
in the haze that surrounds it
the best we could do is count primes
for awhile and concede that there are
a lot with a capital T a crystalline
habit that leaves open making the street
named after your theorem
repaved with astonishment

5.0

Let us follow the proof as it makes for the border
pretends to the eternal
when it is blue or bust

The sanctuary has never been so silent.
White feathers from a dove that once
loved a pigeon flutter
and find alchemical auspices
for wary hands laboring against the wall.
The wind blows the sparks across the hall.
One finds its double and cannot continue
without breaking into song or was it
architecture?

She is not a demographic nor a hare.
The tortoise goes all the way down and returns with Eurydice.

There is a strangeness to the idea.
It follows quick on the heels of many entrapments,
a net insurer for adventuring.

There is a strangeness and it is a figure on the ground.

It follows to the right,

always to the right

as if waiting to step in.

There is an idea to manipulation.

The twist and turning that leaves little to guess, and none too soon.

Lately I have been forgetting myself.

I walk the beach and find a shell

that could not have come

from a larger shell.

It is complete.

It is free from interpretation.

Yes Kenneth, no one will compare it to the sea.

A bee is like,

see, it's shell

is indeterminacy

once the hive is taken into account.

So as to make numerous the set

the sea

all action is reaction planned

to bring down chaos and lead to futurity.

Recognizing any number
if an infinite set
puts it back in the machine it creates.

5.1

From red-capped pens come amazing,
it's active on the hull to shallow to slip.
Deeper and deeper the symbol sets into the abyss
only to echo back on the heath,
on a canyon, far from laurel trees
till the wind knows the character of the soul.
It's symbol erasing any prime.

To derive is to know
commonality
in a set of exceptions.

One place to another, the change is infinitely divisible
until bank equals beachhead.

5.2

The giantesses that play among the waves scrap madly at the sand.
They smash particles from sand. Sent from grandfather mountain
to father shore

I see mother ocean no more.
The giantesses play in the surf
and this is clearly
the site of extinction
and the start of rebirth.

New gods rise up without a prayer and they will sink,
get sucked out to sea, or scatter to the air.

Burn away the old dust.
Its char will be renewed in the oriole's song.
The mud bank and the copse crow ponds.
Words that have rung
like Sunday's infected monster
unctuous
waking is the most unpardonable win.

Stillness is excessive, small.

She passes the broken horizon with a harmonium at hand should William Blake appear.
There is a celebration nearby. Just look, the water mine has run dry.
The salt does not flow down the mountain side.
Aerialists make a mess of us all.

I will continue
to speak beyond
reasonable grounds.

We were all caught wearing white face in public. There were no charges.

Pressed to make a decision, she will pass out dandelions
until the wind is loaded with seed.

Featherweight champions
have made worse mistakes.

5.3

A few words about dream boxes are in order.

The risk is always offensive.

Someone could take it the wrong way.

Dreams prefer the most inopportune hours.

In the dream box, the gathering is no less diverse.

It is the dream that is shared as best it can stand.

Some like to sit next to Joseph Cornell.

Others will peacefully listen, eyes half closed,

imagine Joyce peering through atrocious prescriptions and loving it.

There shall be a circle and a square means of attaining it.

The leitmotif strains under the flutists playing.

Two hands and then a third that we barely see making the rounds.

On the wrist

a recollection of pockets

and waistbands.

The ghost has lost its gears upon the earth

fears cock crows

whether or not its any business.

Late coming archers aim for the sky. Well enough up there.

Why not order in some chaos. We cannot tint the heavens pink and blue.

It could lift up

reveal

the rooftops of Prague

always been here

to be seen.

A fine and worthy sentiment hinting at the divine.

Angels are a slant rhyme.

What the auctioneer said: that heaven is two Russian oligarchs

bidding for the same lot.

I say their lot is to be Russian. That is enough.

Mischief Compels Me [to Add the Whole to the Set of Things it Contains]

Mischief compels me to add the whole to the set of things it contains.

My watch shell needs a ticking and my consciousness needs a bath.

A bell I take it slow, for a change.

It seems like all the best things are laying down. They want sleep just like Jean Cocteau.

I can understand the people blocking the exit.

They want love to be real and dreams to awaken at least 4 feet away.

To quell anxieties about sex or give those without them a few new ones.

We are the new. What's to be shouted down?

The National Assembly went by another name before Cirque de Soleil.

My life was called a *speculative* fiction and it was good.

I ordered a sequel and got instead a week of sunlight that taught me to speak.

We were whole once, that is to say indiscrete.

Our string had few theorems and little practice at deriving a personhood.

In the womb, I followed the princess and looked at the things she neglected for my study.

My first mastery was birth.

Santa Barbara

She said the flower can was empty for the September chrysanthamum
painted black and
signed nine days in.

My water was heated and the green tea powder added.

A whisk and away

the froth went, into the

containing tall trees and suggesting holy space.

A temple could be discerned among the clutter, clearly.

My heart was all in it.

I studied my non existence: tea leaves.

I saw humility and was grateful either way.

The key is laid before the supplicant, though that's not the right word.

key defines and claims his place

temporary

on the mat

The garden grows around the rose.

There is more soup back at the white house where invitations come from.

The fruit came from a different shade.

Circling the rose, it stands

out that the rose

has no stem, no thorn.

Root is behind the petals and retreating from the eye

that would make it mean so many things.

Placement says it all:

tea leaves.

In Memory of Frank's Feelings

Poetry is the dust remaining from the hours love happened in any given room.

That's what Frank said, rhetorically I bet.

He was thinking about James Dean and hoping to catch a break.

The first elegy was in the sand on Water Island.

Frank would also reach, eager to be everything/stopped short
by a dune buggy on the beach at Fire Island.

Was it Buddhists that first prayed with fire?

Hardly, I suspect. That incandescent dance has a practical side.

Namely those parts of the earth too thick to be broken open.

There, the body is returned to the wind instead.

Space is no frontier other than an abstract worth the effort.

So the nose goes hidden in silver.

The bust breaking front and center across the lighted frontier now paved clean.

Even James Dean at 80 would want a snuggie and a doting lover.

Imagine the pictures on his walls next to the photos with presidents and Walter Cronkite.

Now the blow-dried schlubs wouldn't know how to say a cat fight was un-winnable.

That's called good management.

Dean would have returned love's favors.

And he would no longer be worthy of them.

Frank might breathe deeply had he known the floppy consistency of any legendary lover.

I prefer him lithe and fooling from afar.

With a taxi ride, he loves enough to choke runners in Central Park in his dust.

A Jostling Mid-century with its Misty Brooders

A second Romanticism that went under on pills, booze, fame and

All the rest you could ask.

Ah yes, it is a hard brake and a spin

Before the

Century

Ends

The Phrygian Sibyl Speaks in Defense of its Creator

Can it be male or female that makes this back leg disappear?

Do not look too closely. Risk is a given.

One arm shall be left out.

Fair enough. So long as the remaining one is strong and supple.

And who knows! Maybe it is the third arm hiding a protector.

What love of flayed flesh can be left unopened?

This one.

And this one.

And this.

A doorway requires four lines in any combination.

Heraclitian physics sorts it all out.

Leave the poets to their shadows.

Apollo has given freely to all.

Ra nods along.

I call out for more by names I do not have.

It came out garbled and sad.

The mistake shrugged off once I found the symbol and tossed it to the wind.

It always comes back.

6.0

for every person there is equal fruit

the bow bends

the bow binds its eaters in promise

that each

knows

differently

the personhood is as thin as a grape skin

the purpose is the wine

from each to each

the sight

signs

its meaning

while order

is supposed

between

things it was

worked out

in each

time negotiates

the struggle to account for

the unaccountable

understanding gained by calling

home to wilderness

sighting homely heralds

in alien lands

6.1

she shaved her head for innocence

wore a white dress with her mourning cloth

to meet the tear-stained future that weds her this day

to the next

her earrings match

the followers that grieve their personal loss

do not subsume into ranks

in-fighting will do the trick

and take the town without a second loss

for now

it is

white socks

the first martyrs are mourned before the orders reformed

a brash move makes another

savior flee into Egypt

making brothers with return

by the sandalwood tree

the goldfinch sings

these bunches are the first wilderness to befriend

on later consideration

all is worth

it

6.2

times are relative to other times

with respect to the year

I can live with this fucking picture

The taller guy in a brown suit points to the indefinable.

He harbingeres more than the shadow he stands under.

Grandpa smokes his pipe in hints of native dress.

Grandma is a tough glare to beat.

Junior had got his eyes zeroed in on it.

His hand to his chin,

and a bend in his tie,

he does not mind

whatever bothered the photographer behind brown suit guy

to forget to shut the car door.

the fear breaks over me

tho I know it will recede

I cannot help to hear what fear

would say to me

the fear breaks into colors that do not calm

they call

further a field of the day

I know the answer song

the beats keep on

going

until I come

until I come in

Some People don't know the Difference between Meat and Mystery

Some people don't know the difference between meat and mystery.

The ides pass unremarked and the conspiracy pats little dogs on the head.

I took my nostalgia walking that afternoon.

We circled the block before heading west.

There were whole virtues to be imagined

already lost as we made our way over a bridge

and through a tunnel that took us to the other side of a migraine

where things still hold their ominous power as objects to be reckoned with.

Holding a noose about its neck, my nostalgia burst into tears

at the suggestion of draining the pool.

It had made much of swimming and especially loved this activity in the rain.

When I insisted that we go, my nostalgia called me dirty names.

I was a water ape before long. But I have come to grips with this

by studying the people who run from their cars, parked along the road

so that they can pee in the bushes and hope that a larger car would not need to stop.

Choice is an aesthetic to which I am beholden, like all of my tribe.

Barbaric in the morning, we meet every day like the elitist condemned to it.
Our barbarism carries over to afternoon sport among the common grounds called
exertion.
It somehow makes us warriors to pretend to battle.
And in that way we can remain surprised when Death slips by our picket lines,
drops into our fox holes
and trudges along our thoroughfares.
We are more terrified by traffic than the suggestion that all is not lost.
Of course my nostalgia thinks it is lost, and tells me so. I buy it a magazine
to placate the nerves deliberately tuned to it.
When things get really bad, I even pick up a newspaper.
Not too long ago, beginnings were a thing of the past.
Continuous barrage became stimulus and then the lighting went out. Fizzle pop.
The new sensibility was popular
and so it took off.
When defeated, as one day I shall, I will invite the hungry fish to eat my white fat
and feast away until my bones have started to join the deepest waltz.
A salt sacrament that shall one day be met. When defeated, as one day so I shall,
I will burst from my profile in a cacophony of coins.
They shall scatter about the floor and all eventually join the pockets others keep.
Then, my soul will transpire in a candy bar. The vendor's daughter will break hearts
behind the glass and soon even the soda machines at golf courses will sing my name,
only to be overheard between the sharp impact of clubs and balls.

She Says that She Used to Call Bunny Rabbits by Night

She says that she used to call bunny rabbits by night.

The time she ate watermelon was a disaster.

The thing about chance made her wary of blonde-headed boys, except the bottle blondes.

She drank from the stream and became ill enough to leave school

for the year in which she read all of the French poets

and made lists of the Russian names

from books that existentialists liked to write about.

It was her coming out ball, except that means something else these days.

She saved her old razors when her legs got nicked.

Smoking cigarettes

made her feel breezy

and she did cherish the wind, though she had no soul.

I once met her old friends flying kites.

They told me that her lovers could be counted by tens.

She believed in metric sex, and more so, her lust was calculated for the most consequential effect.

That's how wildebeests mate,
her roommate said.

The poor girl thought love was for the bed,
and movie theatres were for necking.

There was this one trick glass she kept that kept the alcohol flowing.
She called it the Jesus cup and whenever she got drunk there was a terrible scene.

Kissing public cheeks made her weep with guilt for all the boys she hadn't ruined.
Just try and fucking rise to the occasion every so often, I tried to say.

It was no use, she was used up by the buying and spending that never tarnished the folds
of her skirts and the crisp sweater music that she made her national anthem.

Your eyes are beautiful, she said the one time out of thousands.

Her vulnerability made woman.

How can you see anything in this light? I replied.

Bear in mind that metrics can have negatives, almosts, and always almosts.

She knew the reputations of all the girls who went to all the historically all-girls schools.

The ones she never applied to.

On occasion, she would map their descent on a bar napkin.

Someone else was always there to provide the pen.

I Will Give You So Much Money

realize that there are coastlines
with the largest houses
friendly driveways
inside the owners give out ice cream
chrome displays
go on from one to the next
to a little cul de sac
a new place for coming home
to everyone you ever saw that you thought you might want to

little red flowers on the shoe's toes
matching cotton shirt
chewing fingernails
only when listening closely
so that speaking will be more precise when it comes time

the hallmark of a good life can be counted
by the moles and freckles remaining benign
a flick of the bathroom light
more final than silence because it exists

and you who would drive slowly along the shore
certain to arrive

The Lady has a Secret

In the poverty of my circumstance I thought to pretend to a throne less world

Titled in my big bold love

This community did not gag

It grew

I was made a fool

Swinging from a tree

Betrayed by my own Bear habits

Slain by another insistence

Called and the rain fell

Slightly to the left

It was an eastward slant

The woman had the right lens

Her models could speak French with their bodies

The lips always slightly parted

The eyes accepting blank gifts in the flash

That blinds briefly the immortality announced

By a photograph

Say Yes

the angel asks you
and so you must choose
holding white lilies
and the same black flowers

Grace Kelly made it to
being a tragic princess too

no American girl can be raised
like royalty, but they can be raised to attain

In the Hilton Hotel, some don't
quite make it. Some of them do

Grace Kelly waves and smiles
before entering a cathedral

Mary says yes and the flowers
desire to be born of a flower w/in

a flower in the time of flowers

follows the beating omen feather

7.0

balls of the feet blot the dust from whence they came tumbling

Out of the establishment

The Name written over the door

Eve in her youth casts a fine shadow

age sets in

The Shadow moves upward to reach for the sky

There was a party that day

early on the locals got word

things took off

some guys followed a star

to this place in the occupied zone

always symbolic of the recipient

gift to the other world called drama

Nature is by law

implying time

Spent

True Time is another word

For God

To use

ALL

Either the law is true

CAPS

& that particular pendulum is not

An “infallible” guide to time...

The Law is really no law at all

the current laws of physics tell them so

We can't expect

any of them

to perfectly match

the ideal perfect

clock according

to which the universe

is governed

Realist/Absolutist

Couldn't time be the result of the combined physical processes?

Newton happens on the page.

It is only here that the apple falls from the tree.

Time on Aristotle is dependent.

It seems time doesn't pass.

Conceive of watching the stars.

Having them stop.

We will still feel—that must stop too.

A Scenario Without Change

Excuse me, can I have some change?

Haven't got any.

Yes, that is why I asked; I haven't got any.

Neither do I.

Could you make some?

Haven't got the parts.

Do I need the parts?

How should I know? I haven't got any.

I think you play a key part.

Would that make you a lock?

Introducing Time

What help is there in being free?

No one said a thousand different things
in the early hour spent too short of the afterwards.

Time was watching for the next vigilante.

A fickle friend that had been around
said Time needed a marker to pass.

Time was that a man knew his heart, he said.

From its beatings, he added.

He took a slow way to this world some thoughtless fellow left spinning on a dime.

Unable to Conceive of a God whose Temper-Tantrums are Moral

[For WH Auden]

limestone is not the only blessing

that dissolves in water

soon all is forgotten with garbage trucks

and outstanding obligations to quell

forget about the well

it leads only to water

that other blessing you know

water which makes the valley

so shadows may dwell unharmed

by the midday objectivity

and the minor claims

to know thy self

patience suits best

the autumnal squall

the next ecological disaster

or folly we money

impersonal tragedy gets its soothing

balm from the associated press

triggers anger confusion and all the rest

an infection at best

not to be pacified by a clever line

the watchmaker puts aside

all the topical creams

loving peace

he wanders the streets

abandoned by the seekers

shouting altogether elsewhere

For Spectacles: Turned into Gold

So it was you who taught the one that
listens deafly to deftly ply the ink stain
which sang ode to joy and then the refrain

a bedroom court played host to all the kindest
ghosts whose slumberous palaver made
the miracle seem charming rather than grossly misapplied

to see gold
rimmed worlds
a tunnel of lies collapse

for spectacles
women on horseback
some fine fellows jokingly bet as to
the hunger artist among the entertainers
the crowd the horse makes its canter
falls in step
the rider smiles for the spotlight

spares the crop falling winter
season out in the provinces where her
parents labor under the promise of Southern sun
and a Northern sun

Zeus sends Agamemnon a false dream
When your daughter gives birth she will
be struck mute with wisdom. Her
every act will be sacred and so you
shall come to be blamed for the stubborn
inconsistencies put before all mothers and every child

Altogether elsewhere the Ave Maria
spun into gold
forgives the miser and the crone
the slut and the bone-picking rascal render a tenor
the alto is also alone

no longer

it got mis-shelved

the bad cut swells

the touchy boy gets well along

saying to his host “the moon

does not howl, it sings softly”

what you call a cat

cowed her sorry bag

got did and done

with the laughing hood

no more plausible pauses

no more playing possum

no more wood

Ciceroticism; The Republic is having Royal Fun

who thinks the future immanent

left it back there, somewhere

with a year like that

who needs eras

there comes a history where one knows a neighbor

by the mole on his back

as he fucks his wife's sister after blood sport

this is age

my friends

would call and not receive

this is the great

age and we the makers

of it

are it and

we are an age for the quiet dignity

by which vice suffocates

in the crib

no sense to graffiti the banks by night

march in search of town square

it has been removed

for our safety

with great care

I think I left the burner on

I, the Impending

a silk ribbon gathered around her
hair his thigh their backs crossed
many times is held in trust by all
company—a child—shod in silver
shoes even the angels seem near
their glum expressions foretell
everything that is to come
I do not ask where it all comes from
in past terms the tale comes undone
I, the impending almighty love
shall fill the very shells with death's echo
caught out of place
can make more than the sea part
advance and replace

I swim in my bones and make wind in the throne

room far from my hovel frighten the despot

who would give a young daughter head
on a platter
where I come

from all

the world is

How Dare the Shadow Cast

by choice and volition I make
for the fruit and say yes
to all the rest in peace protesters
that would cover nakedness is made whole
in the end by exceptional preferential treat

a natural beauty is crowned in silver thread
through her first hair and gathers beatifically
there at the center of humiliation before
the glory and old suffering that makes the
resolute hold high
the urge to look leads
back to the pillar
the place before where
a jealous gauge no is part
the truth thus disposable
the crystalline woke is found to be no crystal
nor rock salt sought during drought

we assure ourselves that she leads us here
with joy and weeping the loss they share
it is found among immortal grace
sexless beauty too virginal to know
the truest curves that led happy hunters
to their moment of truth
albeit an unpardonable event
riding shotgun to other horizons
it views a vastness that expands

no prophet need say I was born between
two animals
it is the same with dogs
creatures confided to the earth
I assume sand is made in waves
the constant bashing of elements
water against rock
is another kind of birth
but coming together is the finest
interlopers great players on the shore
ignore the mountain's insistence
and the ocean's epic path

Not Waving But Drowning

“the teeth by which the jaws of the intellect grip the flesh of occurrence”

-D.C. Williams

there are those who love it

the way time is represented by space

a point is nothing

out of it something

the line, the plane, the 3rd dimension

and some would claim

Time. Tenseless and seeming

everywhere to be now

b/c there is not just my love

also its chiming

the end of the hour, of a day, of a lifetime movie

blearily droning in the background

(tho I doubt it helps to whiten the noise)

and starts with a bang

a creative whoosh that adds

something special to the mix

Past Present Future

Ratified or misapprehended the thresh

hold breaks loose

in another sense that may be ripe with possibility

or rotten with it

some of it is fermenting

on the ground

beneath the world tree

at the top, it opens up to the future

and buries (as it captures the divine light)

what-is-done-is-done so that both ends

are eating the stuff of us all

the world tree between them is merely two mouths to feed

one with light in all its currentcy

one with soil

to grow

one with soul

to grow

you would think there would be some piece

of you left after the part that is sunny

returns without the part that is earth

what is does not render
remains
what it renders is left unsettled
time makes the unrealized eventually real

old shoes, you are getting on
events and pageantry do not phase you
they wave the flag and roar
it is mirth, not war
these students play at war

I stop to sit in the shade with a bearded poet who shares his cigarette
I tell him about an Eastern European book of essays
translated into English
all about clowns clowning at dictators
how it is done
things like that

he disagrees
he wants to see the clowns throwing bombs at the dictators

and what about the dust?

Bombs make an atrocious amount of dust
I know a lady who served drinks
in Manhattan when bombs were all the rage
she has uranium poisoning now

bearded poet shrugs after her old building, the one with the sewage
just a few feet below her basement apartment's floor
perhaps was once the Manhattan project

8.0

the brooding critics brood and agree

these Realists call their meeting

and turn to face the center

as it emanates a destructive light

they are dismantled by bliss

in the iridescent blackbird with golden eye

turn purple and blue

what is it, indigo?

It circles and starts at the flight

another little dinosaur

waddling into small trees

with low hanging branches

and timeless leaves

8.1

the golf carts pass

there used to be one filled with students

mostly girls with a lot of pep

wearing red for Rebel Red Day

they did this every Thursday
an occasion only they celebrated that year
as the state of Nevada decided to dismantle the rising university
of its ambitions—too costly for a few Nevadans
who get to say so

slowly these students began to harass those of us
who believed in Thursdays, not Rebel Red Days
their cheers and peppy reminders to wear red next Rebel Red Day
became less sustained as the weeks passed
their reminders became curt memos
blared from a bullhorn

it got so bad it felt like being attacked by golf cart marauders
armed with pep and bitterness
nobody wanted to cheer the team anymore
and even the golf cart
pep squad
of vengeance
forgot to say Go Rebs
thinking the crowd at fault
the University put a stop to this awful charade
or there was simply no one to get on the golf cart anymore

The Promise Bears A Ring

Somebody else's granddad on the cover of a program stares up at me from the table.

The lamp aims its light on old heroes
now lost from view—the lamp burns
brightly to the arc of night light.

The moon fails to be anything but hostile and strange when the mood strikes.

I abhor the symbols from an older age.
The sacred meanings form a ring.

A 50 dollar promise is returned
on the third insult, the damage more
than needed—or just.

Just can be a complaint against settling, of being
always sorry till buyer's remorse is a myth
so well known as to be iconic.

I do not clash by night.

Barbed tho it be, the hook is straight.

If I just stay here long enough there will be a reason to.

on the other end of horrible is here

to stay

doubt will make my bed a den of weeds

The thieves have broken the seal.

The tomb lays empty ready to see.

I will arrive on the other side of a new idol

with my clay feet and charms.

The crackle a peanut choir makes

seems to be the organ on fire.

I tried darkly to pass by this incongruity and I could name more.

I need to die and be reborn.

9.0 (to Infinity)

dissatisfaction is her greatest gift

the light

the lens

the lantern and the pen

give their gift to it

the world will prove to be made

for her

as it adamantly

asserts that it is

the cold familiar

winds its way

the casual

that standing thing

we do in the Macy's white t-shirt aisle

near the socks and briefs

the plastic packaging gleams

reflecting the cold familiar wind

uncertain of all

they enter

saved from this or that

let me tell you from them

and I will

make it

worth the time

I will make it and so will they

time is enough

kept at bay

Man in a Polyester Suit = Beauty?

I think freedom wears it on the outside.

Three decades have not diminished the cuffs the sharp set would consider too long.

It replicates the way Beauty does
not need a head or feet.

The stillness it loses, all in black and white.

Everyday business can trans the act.

A vein, running the length of the until—

Before We Were Gods

violated in white like a body that started to function as an X
the face has all but disappeared for greater power and thus less specificity

the rude porcelain mask with its boils
loosens its clasp on the human child and its other
who together enter heaven after a long journey to fog fouled lands
where the stone walls are small and their gates creak across a millennia's woe

Sister to her Brother says have we sold the merchants
has the strength been

parceled

the redemption collected by the deserving

a fan mirrors agitation

the expressive fold of her robe

not yet determinate of her sex color is the gender cleanliness in line

with her brother it is different

it is salaciously mean to seem so unconscionably green

a river runs through his elbow

pads along his banks ready to make

barn swallows

hill demons

the bandit and his lonesome

he says I will be a pillar broken by time

immutable rock gives way to divine shadow

the lush three ply music covers Nothing in a koan

all the holy was there to celebrate its epoch entirely

ignorant of

the slack rush around

a newer dynamic

its humanism

leads youth

to forsake assets and play drums

the two new entities wait patiently for their portrait

the profane multitudes are turned like mulch as they sing

so much more life

when we are sun-hungry weeds

Vissi d'arte / Vissi d'amore

"I'm much more materialistic about my soul than about things"-Patti Smith

I have lived for art and I have lived for love

at times there was room for both

at times there was nothing

palimpsest leaving the impression

backwards on the sense of two-ness and double

sometimes I like to write on big pages

using big letters

it makes me feel important like Pepsi or coke

I have to feel important first

judiciousness came come later

at first, in the advent of light and creation

you have to feel like you are tearing the very fabric of society

that the world is disintegrating at your touch

so that you can take up the pieces

the fibers of the world

and reconstitute them into a more perfect whole

art is blaspheme

filled with grace

we the innocent

monsters

make up the lies that will be truthful to themselves

and operate maybe

like a machine or a city

when the blackout doesn't affect one's chance of hailing a cab

of getting to the destination quickly and paying the fare plus tip

and going into the theatre to see the production

where the stage crew stands next to the actors

holding wax candles that burn

there ought to be words for the quality of stillness that expresses the radical activity in

being still

I wish to have a factory of my own

wherein the production stills are easily stored, released, sold, returned

wherein the Immortal burdened with Sisyphean tasks

can crawl out from the blood soaked sand pit

and walk on back to the capital to try again to save humanity

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