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Introduction

Clayton Eshleman

BERDACHE

Under my childhood bed, using the dark to become. Arranging soldiers, head to head, the dark dear, and me in my little ark, snuggled next to Sparky or Ginger, my Irish terrier familiars. To nest, as a child to cease being a child, to draw on the floor, finger wandering insignias of no. To feel the ark edge, the limit of my caul. To be, just a bit.

In my closet doorway to sit, and turn on my 8 mm projector, watching cartoons. Then to draw my own, Crummy and Dummy, little crows in robes. Based on the Katzenjammer Kids, crows acting up, inklings of moving as another, not having a self but wanting a new self, "anywhere out of this world."

Sparky and then Ginger lived in the back of our garage in a pen my father constructed with a little door to an outside pen. Over the pen inside the garage was a little loft reached by a ladder, for tools and occasionally for me, barefoot in one of my mother's dresses. The dress allowed me to twist about, I thought, like a dog and to pretend to have pups. Sparky once had eight.

Tell how I returned to her womb. Tell how I wrapped in her organs, how I struggled there not to be born, but to move from under-bed-space to closet-door-space to pen-over-Sparky-space, a substitute boy seeking to not be an Indiana scorpion.

*Note: This was first submitted in 2005 as part of the "Life In The Folds" issue (August 2005 VOL XIII Issue 8, Number 148 special - updated 22 Apr 06) but somehow overlooked and lost.

Ndue Ukaj

Utopia

Everything is different, in the horizon the Sun is crumbled
The crumbles remained on the earth's heart like triumphant arrows.

We can't recognise the colors through the wind caressing the memory
We do not read poetry in the universe of fullishness
Where relations between darkness and light
Appear just like relations between the wall and thought.

Behind is played the surprising game, just like before
Birds are falling in the ground, just like in times when hell was written,
Oh God, everything has changed,
At a time when a small fence is darkening our our big eyes.

The moon finds a path through nummy hands remaining like arrows towards the sky
And the sun dissolving just like a candle through tired eyes
Who can't see anything in the blue sky, except a small cloud
A cloud darkening everything

Therefore vision is coiled in space
Just like the wind creating its avalanche
Then many faces appear.
At a night, when everything is different,
Containing inside the borders within your head
When you feet walk through illusions
And sqweeze their bad dreams
For the time that isn't, for the time that wasn't
For the time that will not come
For the time that goes with the wind.
Utopia struggling against reality
Her dreams hiding at the corner of secrets
Are swallowed

Modern Odyssey

Through dreams makes love with Penelope,
The road to Ithaca is longer than its distance
Between the dream and reality...where the tired vision
Explodes in search of Ithaca
And returned to the word in the traditional nest.
At the swamp full of memories
Where their roses are falling apart.
And take the color of Autumn. Tragically.
Is stepped over them, just as in lost grounds.

Without a brake opens its minimized eyes
Its tired eyes, faded from the endless search.
In trouble he is descending the stairs of memory
And opens the pages of nostalgia. Full of passion.

In the roads of the world is criss-crossed his confused search.
While with nostalgia is searching a small place to take a break
Nervous from the tempted cruiser of life
In the waves of memory dissolved just as the Sun dew.

Odyssey died in antiquity.
In the lap of Penelope is relaxing
With the mountain of memories that are fading,
Every time that Troy is burned.
And Penelope in the window is drawing the reception.
Welcome as large as longevity
And the letters of this poetry
Extending their voice up in the sky.

Sensing the aroma of myself

She demands an answer
For the great dilemmas as big as insuperable mountains.
Sitting in an open window, and looks above
Very high over “Mother Theresa’s Square
Where European and Asians walk together.

Suspicion has shaken her
The same as a man shaken by a nightmare
In the dark room, with implanted identity

She looks like a portrait full of mystery
And demands the passionate response
For the daily questions:
Who am I, Me, Is it me?
Or the head’s shade falling over me
Colors, homesickness, love, longevity
And the abyss staying nearby her feet.

The window is closed, her eyes enclosed
Europeans move quietly
Through “Mother Theresa” square.

Albanians sceptical in the middle of white and black.
She enlightens the great wall of dilemmas
And sadly demands, who am I?
She cannot find herself in the century of screams,

Goes through the book of memory,
Just like going through a naked book revealed on a first look.
While escaping from herself
Hidden like the horse in a dense grass,
And meditates: Who doesn’t want to be me?

Juicy fruits

Beauty is high, between earth and sky
Me and you.

A brain with mixed thoughts,
Is like the great homesickness with rare truths
Hidding below a dense grass, wetted grass.
Beauty is high, between earth and sky
Me and you.

Where the truth falls,
Just like tall oak trees from the storm

That's how the path is lost from darkness and gates are invisible
In the sacred city.

Time prohibits to reveal the true face
In the great garden, where all fruits, all flowers, are planted,
Altogether with pain with love.

Deserves happyness
Yes, the miracle of happyness.

Your glimpse is vigorous,
And your eyes have turned into dry creeks.

The beauty is high, between earth and sky
Me and you.

Oh, how brown is the soil and trees have absorbed the soil's color.
Except happyness is a tree with juicy fruits
In the garden where a dense grass hides our feet.

Without Time

In the middle of the blue sky and the black Earth
A few clouds are making the game of time
Occupy the Sun rays
And don't wet the Earth at our wish,
My God, the game of contrasts is scratching our eyes
While my toast raises her head just as the line of the marathon
In the empty streets I gather the metaphors
Searching with persistence, without time and calendar
Through the flowers full of spines, pain
With an old sack full of dreams.
Walking in the empty roads, were there is no triumphant
In the roads were black haltered
And the evil myth smiling for the eyes of the world.

With a morning pain, you mention that the red doesn't shine.
The white is growing our wide open eyes, screaming on the dreams
In order to ruin your spoiled spirit
In the dark places where the time is scratched
We return our vision towards research
We live for tomorrow, there is no time today.
The hierarchy of pain is raised in the lips of time
Where the calendars of noise absorb our feelings
Time, love and brain.
And the shadow
Oh the shadow,
Yes the shadow
She is dissolved without traces
Is the deception of truth
Even afflicting the spoiled imagination
Of our time.

John Grey

CLANCY THE FISHERMAN

Night buried mama in her evening dress.
Cold as a pitchfork, I remember,
and rain stacking up twilight
like the dead.

Kit was there, sitting on the sideboard
of the old car.
And the black neighbor,
sometime preacher, sometime gravedigger.
And an old aunt said to me,
“Now what will you do?”
I was suddenly a “you”.

Thick grass I recall.
And the wind was no prize.
Mourners were spaced apart
like birch trees.
And Kit just sat there,
fascinated, I think,
by the bird on the wire.

“When you are lonely,
you will think of this,”
said Byron.
So what will I remember?
The rain? Those clouds
with no feel for the Milky Way above?
The dark-limbed thrash of oaks
beyond the field?
Or the certainty of soil
flopping on a coffin lid
like tears of mud?

When I am lonely,
I throw a string out into the river
with hook and writhing worm
in search of catfish.
I grip the pole, my part of the bargain.
The fish nibbles its way to death.
When I am lonely,
there's a fine line between us.

BEYOND THE MORNING NEWSPAPER

The bare skull of the mountain
dons a wispy cloud fedora.
A flighty scarlet tanager drips like blood
on pine and poplar bough.
Dew sparkles on the grass, the scattered dandelions.
At the bottom of the front steps, a battered milk can stands guard.
In the rough hands of my father, the newspaper pages slowly turn.
No floods, no droughts here.
No wars, no killings.
At worst, a stray dog skitters across the front lawn
in pursuit of a rabbit.

Dawn yawns over the lake,
gilds the cottages on the other side.
The barn gleams like a haggard old woman
retrieved by morning makeup.
Everywhere I look, objects reclaim their shape from yesterday,
are gauzed by light for good measure.
Deer nibble on the lush grass at the forest edge,
coats dappled cinnamon.
The shining water takes a turn for the better
around its soft green banks,
lap by gentle lap.

My flanks are gold.
My sky's a light blue granary.
My horizon filters out the articles
my father's eyes skim through..

PLUMBER, A DIAGONAL COMPOSITION

The plumber comes to replace
the shower head.
He's a talker but not about the Red Sox.
He loves art, especially Matisse.
What's next? A Dadaist mailman?
A fanatic follower of Jasper Johns
stacking the shelves at the supermarket?
The plumber is screwing, unscrewing,
while at the same time, raving about
the Matisse show at the Museum Of Fine Arts.
Who'd have thought a tradesman
could be so influenced by Fauvism.
I'm thinking though, maybe I should have
asked for Rocco, the Duchamp handy-man.
Turn on the shower
and a nude descends my stairs.
To be honest, the plumber,
for all his artistic sensibility,
is as useless as my grandmother's water-colors.
The head still drips, the flow is intermittent.
And as for the water temperature...
to misquote Matisse,
"when it says hot, it does not mean hot,
when it says cold, it does not mean cold."
Maybe the easiest thing to do is sell out,
let it be someone else's problem.
So I call up this real estate agent I know
but he's away at this Picasso show downtown.
His secretary says he'll get back to me.
And he'll get front to me too.

John W. Sexton

Anti-Mortal

the Stopped-Machine ON ...
Time unhappening
by interminable seconds

flutter of lunar faces
silver cloaks uncluster
in the wardrobe

pulped men become
kilometre-long spaceships
their minds fastened to light

thrombosis jackpot -
three lemons' worth
of sour nillions

channels of your brain
bloodherring shoals 6 month
subscription on iSKY

anti-mortal
in their half-lives ... the taken
of Hiroshima

our christening gift
to the future ... untold sieverts
of nuclear glass

and then
we wait ...
the stone submarine

Purer Times

moonlit, the cabbages
shine white ... stars spell
Beatrice all through the sky

thus Seraphim slice souls
... a brittle length
of obsidian string

aged eight dissembling
a biro - thunk myself into a
moonrocket

plum-wine astral jump -
Issa stamps through metal snow
in the Venus peaks

solar signatures...
radio-
active dialect

trodden
crickets crickets crickets crickets
creak in a wooden conscience

dissected by thousands
of butterfly shadows
i

under grassy hills
ghosts of locomotives
... echoes of purer times

fold a möbius strip
from the serpent's gut...
give hell a sky at last

sexless mindless faceless ...
human race the sediment slop
of ocean

Soft Om Vortex

one-way ...
the entrance enters the exit
of the cornucopia

atomic fission ...
all added fractions less
amount to more

my black cat Smudge ...
the starless night
brings the cold in on his fur

Nostradamus pours
an amber portal ... his chamber pot
frees the past

a potato with wormy eyes
the earth's iPod ...
ten thousand blight-tunes

jungle magnolias
opening all at once
... a soft om vortex

Resurrection Window
sunlight throws Christ's face
into the wall

hydrangeas
suddenly moonlight ...
moths linger leprous

Beyond the Happened

sent by white light ...
all you mundane dead
reside in the spam box

still the fokbombs spore
their scream-fogs ... hedgehorses neigh
some myth of man

house with whendows ...
outside nothing was happening
beyond the happened

the master butcher
converts a leg of lamb ...
meat laptops send bloodtext

the Angel of Skin
begins to burn ... a pus waits
for Oppenheimer

today bluebottle blue
the excrement throne
of Beelzebub

penetrating ten thousand years ...
the wreck
of the astral ship

Ute Margaret Saine

CRYSTAL COVE, CALIFORNIA

la danza curva del agua en la orilla
the curvy dance of water on the shore
Federico García Lorca

Sand patient
to the impatient
imprint of water
rivulets etching
light and dark panes
aureoles branch off
stretching to leafy designs

Sand the water ferries
grain for grain out to sea
that water carries back
settling concentric
dripping sliding half moons
around restless rivulet springs

Sand slipping through placid
puddles left by the surge
from the last tide

Sand the tacit placid river
overwhelmed by itself
swept to and fro by the tide
the pull of earth and water
tugging at each other
pushing and pulling
fusing to consummate
like us

ANCESTOR

Driftwood
what has it seen
tumbling
in waves and surfs
sucked by undertows

Careening onto rocks
floating through shallows
caught in winds
sculpted by cliffs
polished by sands

Overgrown
with barnacles and plants
then denuded again
breaking free

Driftwood lies at my feet
seemingly
deprived of life
beautiful ancestor
of living trees
and of me

**IN THE SAME GARDEN
or DAMOZEL WITHOUT DISTRESS***

I speak through the weathers
of my passion
becalmed by a longing
for you
port of an embrace
with your arms around
my soul

Your kisses
not sealing but
opening my lips
my whole self
with your tongue
entwined in mine
licking the balsam
words of love

For we now exist
in the same garden

*Refers to The Blessed Damozel, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Don Quijote's damsels in distress.

RAINDROPS

When we will

lie in each other's arms
outside worlds
outside words
will glide off us
as raindrops

We will be

two braided bodies understood
tightly wound in their embrace
then slowly unraveled relaxing
taking through calm
a silent drenching stillness
words and worlds
quenching our thirst

APHASIA

Not having the words
the infant [in-fans] babbles
anxiously we unfold a smile
imagine the approaching unsaid

Child's talk moves us
to envision all of life
the hopes and the fears
lived and unlived
in the future of the child

Let alone a man
who enters our language
as a guest, traveler
into an unknown house
stammering words
nearly unintelligible

And in **his** house
so do we
enter into his tongue
exploring it
like a strange ship

Hidden words
wrapped in remote times
shuttle back and forth
budding germs of sounds
explode like balloons
fireworks on open seas
vowels left to chance
heard breathing
rasping consonants hiss, whisper
and sigh, swimming like sails
Portuguese man of war—or of peace
smile of an evening breeze

Bits of words float to and fro
enticing -- unknown
almost-words rekindled
born and reborn
each time we two embrace

NIGHT TANGLED IN TREES

FOUR HAIKU

night tangled in trees,
a distant bird, car, siren,
sound from a distance

eavesdropping on our
embrace, stars turning into
our accomplices

two breaths fold in the
palm of night, naked bodies
drown in each other

each giving, taking,
a shiver of want,
a sliver of desire

A.J. Huffman

On a Luna's Wing

I like the dance of the pen.
The shine of the ink.
And the ease of the words.
As they/I fill
line after line. Space after space.
Saying everything, anything,
nothing.
The beauty stays the same.
As the motion is the effort;
is the god.

In the Iron Emptiness

Here on the surface nothing
is ever what it seems. Constantly
moving/changing/waving/expanding/
shattering. At a touch.
Don't give up. Reach
deeper. Underneath there is something
blind, somewhat cooler, but solid-
like. You can keep it --
physically -- in the cage
of your mind. As long as you aren't bothered
by the constant tapping of its head
against the glass.

Blanket of Oblivion

Blue and green don't mix.
They only die.
Drowning each other
in gray.
Building the landscape I see.
The one you won't even think about.
Negative
and grotesque.
It shadows yours.
Hoping to figure a way alive.
But your colors are cruel.
Separated
and segregated.
They do not pool their edges
to make the whole.
And so I cannot find a slit,
a slot,
or a crack.
Willing to take a chance.
On my lonely almost-black.

Micah Cavaleri

Love is the law, love under will.

the seer's foundation
at the edge of space, a hologram
spreads itself thin (thing) projection deformed up
the imag(in)e of something us, these connections, these circuits, this empty black space, no circuits,
randomness, energies
then there is the seer.

if what we are is this image, we have foundation

the seer (is shaken then) nothing (then a seer), a two-dimensional projection along the edge of
green space
green a dimension,
the edge truly mathematically thin, just a location on the horizon and no more

somewhere an)accidental fire(reaches out across the gaps to burn all
all that is
the seer on fire, a sign of (a)foundation

then a calm, particles on fire colliding)and all around is calm(, radiation leaving a green

there is no more

the seer blind

rough ground and black
the extent of the entire
the seer blind
here is the edge (always)

*

crystalline ladders
the emptiest region of cold
the seer blind
where there is heat

*

waves of light
streaming like particles
the seer blind
this is the way

*

waves stream
like particles, break
like waves, break
the seer blind
this is the way
the emptiest coldest region
rough ground and black
the extent of the entire

forward with question
forward with question
the seer is blind
the muse, break

face open to the sun
with hot waves of rush calm
ruach like spirit, end, break

an astronomical unit of space
covers two planets: burning Mercury and choking Venus:
the blind see, break, foundation

I the blind seer
I
the blind seer
the character that surrounds a point,
break, of view

and only for a moment an angel, and then

I
the seer
the blind character, again, the waves of hot air

and only for a moment an other, and then

I
the blind seer, the character
of Ur, break, a point of view, break

I, the blind seer, the character of Ur, break a point of view,

I,
the seer, the waves of hot air again,
a point of view.

Nick Williamson

Saint Paul Moulade

At the lunatic asylum
we head for the gift shop
where Vincent's treasures
are splattered on mugs
scarves , fridge magnets.

Frankie says we came
for the culture and it has
been beautiful - a field of
lilac, viewed from a window
olives, sunflowers

a silvery almond tree
and these strange tubs
of freezing water where they
doused patients who'd become
too nervy.

My little brother

I grew up in Takapuna. We lived in a three storied house on a cliff. My younger brother was a dwarf. He was better than me at almost everything: arithmetic, sailing, carpentry, French. He was two years younger than me and he never grew above four feet.

His name was Hugo Pierre Williamson. His head was of a normal size. It was his arms and legs that were most curtailed. He had plump little fingers and stubby toes, yet he was my mother's favourite. She had a thing about dwarves. She had been engaged to one before she married my father and afterwards they kept in touch.

Entering the steppes

Here is our teacher, Mr Oswald.

He is drawing a white train on the snowy blackboard.

He leans over my desk, whispering that sounds can be linked,
like railway carriages.

His tweed coat stinks of tobacco. A whiff of hair cream lingers
around his head.

Syllables, he says,

but I have already boarded a warm carriage

steaming into the blizzard,

leaving Mr Oswald, tweed coat and brylcream, at his lonely station.

Leaving Raumati

Combing the ashes
I find you dark-eyed in your doorway.
There I am beside an ancient cream Corolla
all packed up, my black dog jammed in the back.

For a moment we hesitate.
Your grey dressing gown is tied at the waist
your cheeks are blotched pink and swollen
your black hair astray.

A thin Norfolk pine stands in the background
before the low mound of Kapiti. There is your bird-bath
holding out its bowl of still water, the garage
where I scratched your blue Integra.

There are no birds or wind. Neither of us speak.

Name Dropping

At Purakanui you show me your garden:
the frail hydrangea, the gladioli, the dark
macrocarpa looming over the house.

I scan the crinkled ocean to catch
my ancestors sailing in on the silver light:
Mr and Mrs Longuet-Levi and their six kids

all the way from London.
I watch them struggle up the dirt path to lay
their handkerchief on fifty acres. It's 1849.

On the bare hill my great, great grandmother
smoothes the sky with a sheet.
The same wind that brushes my hair.

Somewhere out there they dropped half our
name overboard. Ten years later Lewis Longuet
opened the first shop in Bluff.

Post Scriptum

Diana Manister

Chanson d'Amour

Of love hadde I nevere joye nor bliss,
No happieness wold it bryng me,
Lett troubydours reyse theyre voyces in songe,
I wol not be synging.

Wel I remembere my love affayre
Withe a laydie wondrous faire
Wen gealousey and payne ymixed
Distrest my hart withe angewysshe
And I hadde nythere smyle nor kysse.

Lett knights ysyng like byrds in spryng
Through the beechwood rynging,
Love has ever brought me nought
And I am loth to syng.

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COMMENTS & SUBMISSIONS

Submission and comments should be sent to Klaus Gerken, Chief Editor at kgerken@synapse.net

Submission must be in the body of an email unless otherwise agreed on.