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Klaus J. Gerken

dust

nowhere to hide
and nowhere to go
i ransom my reason
for the sake of my soul

ive seen loss not gather
a hollow dispel
ive seen loss fall into
a dried up well

i know when youre thirsty
you see a dry sun
caesar and cleo
wasnt that fun

the mornings come easy
its the day comes undone
everything else
seems a stormed bastion

i wonder i wonder
i wonder three times
i pray to the moon
to send me a rhyme

i will water my garden
i will drink a sweet wine
i will listen to songbirds
and who in love do entwine

its a god give acre
that you control
oh babe give us
another roll

when the morning wobbles
it wobbles for us

lets go out together
and not make a fuss

theres a proven horizon
beyond the main mast
where clouds gather
we take our repast

so let me enter you freely
i am not what will last
shadows together
light is a blast

when they dust off the bones
but i have my doubts
who will even remember
what i was about?

kjg 12:47 a. m. 20 aug 2020

Ethan Cunningham

CONTEXT

gravel crackles in evening gloom
in concrete valleys metal trees
cast recurring pools of light
in the urban night abyss

a shadow
female
stabs the ground faster
car keys clenched and spiked through
her knuckles
battle-ready
all the world her enemy
every man her foe

shrinking from scathing glances she
casts in my direction, I am
staring groundward letting her
diligently outpace me

alone at a bar we might have
become friends
a glass of wine
a sparkling glance
a kiss
maybe
but here's the forked truth

isolated, the slabs of iced
pavement parking filled with fog
instead make me her problem
shunned, avoided, gouged, burned, and stomped

when at last she's vanished
into the jungle gloom
my lungs exhale
my muscles relax

I am safe
I am me again

DINNER PARTY

clinking icy clatter of cocktails
a surreptitious wink
a portal of inclusion into
an exclusive moment
shared and secret
sends flutters down
my throat, into my guts
lover, hostess
the slender golden key of
my hopes and dreams
fragile like the thin glass
of mixed drinks
nudged or dropped
at the whim of careless spirits

THE FLOCK

white light.
a long fluorescent bulb.
dull. sick.
a pain in the skull.
my stomach churns in
the stagnant air.
suffocating. dry.
the stuff desiccation
is made of.
this is modern Purgatory.
an abyss of false illumination
where one waits
outside of time
in a crowd of listless eyes.
zombies. sheep.
whose rotting brains
stink the room with their fetid mush.
catch my neighbor's glossy glare
empty. null.
but a reflection
nonetheless.
in his mirrors
a milky-eyed corpse
stares back.
my expression
just like the rest of them.

THE SOUND OF SOUND

by

PETER HANDKE

ANNOUNCEMENT.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

Coca-Cola, poured silently from the bottle to the glass, foams,
until the carbon dioxide bubbles cannot be heard any longer.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

The refrigerator begins to hum and hum until it stops.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

A piece of soft butter falls from the table to the stone floor.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

A thick newspaper falls to the floor.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

Someone, wearing a rustling robe, walks past on tip-toes.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAU--

A jug, standing in error on the wet table top, shatters.

PAUSE.

A postage stamp is slowly peeled off an envelope.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE--

A telephone receiver is hung up softly.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

A hand held vacuum cleaner is turned on, without sucking up any dirt. Then turned off again.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

A piece of red liver falls from the table to the stone floor.

PAUSE.

A piece of celophane is slowly crumpled up.

PAUSE.

The light switch is switched on.

PAUSE.

Someone turns from one side to the other in bed.

PAUSE.

An elastic band is pulled over a mason jar and then let snap.

PAUSE.

A band-aid is slowly peeled off a finger.

PAUSE.

With a single stroke, butter is scraped from wrapping paper.

PAUSE.

The electric stove is turned on.

PAUSE.

A "flat iron" is placed on a marble board.

PAUSE.

A soft heavy coat is dragged across the floor.

PAUSE.

A matchstick, struck, flares up, until the flame can no longer be heard.

PAUSE.

Gas from a gas-burner hisses. Then, ignited by a lighter and turned off again.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

From a silent telephone receiver just picked up, distant voices can be heard: the voice of a man and a woman, who, on another line are conducting an almost unintelligible conversation. "What did I tell you?" one hears; then: "Anybody could have told you that."; and then: "When it concerns life and death, one does something."; then there is silence.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

A heavy fur coat falls to the stone floor.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAU--

Again, a heavy fur coat falls to the floor, this time with the buttons hitting the floor first.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

Slowly a brush is pulled through crackling hair.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAU--

The record player turns itself off.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAU--

Quietly, fat begins to crackle in a pan.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAU--

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAU--

A wet towel is slowly squeezed dry, but in such a way one can only hear the squeezing.

PAUSE.

PAU--

Someone slowly scratches his fingernails over a piece of paper.

PAUSE.

A thick drop of water falls on a tin plate.

PAU--

A plug is pulled from the electric light socket.

PAU--

The "flat iron", standing upright on the marble board, cracks, as it begins to cool.

PAU--

The "flat iron" cracks again.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

Very soft background music: "Mourning morning, sad day...mourning morning, sad day..." from the song "Mourning sad morning" from the album "Free" by FREE, Island Records ILPS-9104....

LONG SILENCE.

A bath-mat, soaked in water, is slowly stretched, until there is nothing left to hear.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

PAUSE.

SIGN OFF.

END

Translated from the German by Klaus J. Gerken 24 Aug 1977
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Michael Lee Johnson

Flower Girl (V2) *If you get a chance, please listen to Mp3 audio, poem song, Flower Girl (V2)-special.*
(Tears in Your Eyes)

By Michael Lee Johnson

Poems are hard to create
they live, then die, walk alone in tears,
resurrect in family mausoleums.
They walk with you alone in ghostly patterns,
memories they deliver feeling unexpectedly
through the open windows of strangers.
Silk roses lie in a potted bowl
memories seven days before Mother's Day.
Soak those tears, patience is the poetry of love.
Plant your memories, your seeds, your passion,
once a year, maybe twice.
Jesus knows we all need more
then a vase filled with silk flowers,
poems on paper from a poet sacred,
the mystery, the love of a caretaker—
multicolored silk flowers in a basket
handed out by the flower girl.

Silent Moonlight (V2)

By Michael Lee Johnson

Record, she's a creeping spider.
Hurt love dangles net
from a silent moonlight hanger,
tortures this damaged heart
daggers twist in hints of the rising sun.
Silence snores. Sometimes she's a bitch.
Sunlight scatters these shadows
across my bare feet in
this spotty rain.
Sometimes we rewind,
sometimes no recourse,
numbness, no feeling at all.

July 4th, 2020, Itasca, Illinois (V4)

(At Hamilton Lakes)

By Michael Lee Johnson

Stone carved dreams for men
past and gone, freedom fighters
blow past wind and storms.
Patriotism scared, etched in the face of cave walls.
There are no cemeteries here for the old,
vacancies for the new.
Americans incubate chunks
of patriotism over the few centuries,
a calling into the wild, a yellow fork stabs me.
Today happiness is a holiday.
Rest in peace warriors, freedom fighters,
those who simply made a mistake.
I gaze out my window to Hamilton Lakes
half-drunk with sparkling wine,
seeing lightning strikes ends,
sparklers, buckets full of fire.
Light up the dark sky, firecrackers.
Filmmakers, old rock players, fume-filled skies,
butts of dragonflies.
Patriotism shakes, rocks, jerks
across my eye's freedom locked
in chains, stone-carved dreams.

**This year, 2020, due to COVID-19 I watch fireworks off my condo balcony alone,
share darkness alone, share bangers in the open sky.*

Fall Thunder (V2)

By Michael Lee Johnson

There is power in the thunder tonight, kettledrums.

There is thunder in this power,
the powder blends white lightening
flour sifters in masks toss it around.

Rain plunges October night; dancers
crisscross night sky in white gowns.

Tumble, turning, swirl the night away, around,
leaves tape-record over, over, then, pound,
pound repeat falling to the ground.

Halloween falls to the children's
knees and imaginations.

Kettledrums.

Steven Stone

DARE TO LOVE.

a sense of rain:
impatient
storms gliding in
on buttoned-up
terrified towns;

sweet green farms
pretend to be gold
like a promise made
in the deep grass
where we lay

much too long ago
much too far from here

as my age quietly
follows me around the
world it is spring still,
yet green has no name

I want to favor you for
my final go-round; I will
dare love you now as ever;

the wind has turned
my shoulders
and my windows shudder

Steven Stone

June 2020

MOUNTAIN.

once when a mountain
spoke to black clouds

brought forth the snow
of a million winters

daybreak woke to the
shocking wind

all things that barreled
down to meet me; to
meet the mountain;

let it be written this way
south of sunsets in the
noble twilight

it is not the brain that
sees apostasy

bled dry as a star-bone
white with sympathy

oleander
white-wish rubbed
on the cold metal

dormant as the
church of the mind
at midnight

I say the sacred syllables
the mountain bows to
me

i bow to her and all
that is She.

Brain Dead

By

RD Larson

Death creeps closer,
Yet, he knows it not.
His friends weep,
His mother bleeds tears,
Not now, not now.
He is in a dream of
Unknown glory
And glitter,
While reality is
Fading fast away.
Those who knew
His living fire
are
Defeated
by its
Quenching
end
for dead is dead

DS Maolalai

Bio: *DS Maolalai has been nominated seven times for Best of the Net and three times for the Pushcart Prize. His poetry has been released in two collections, "Love is Breaking Plates in the Garden" (Encircle Press, 2016) and "Sad Havoc Among the Birds" (Turas Press, 2019)*

The meal.

breathing afterward
and half asleep
in the tatters of our
red bedroom.

I am a plate
and the scraps
of good steak
left by someone
very hungry. I am gristle,
bitten corners of bone
and smeared grease.
a little red,
some scummy yellow
and bitten fat
and you beside me,
breathing also. you are
also steak.
you were the same
steak.
and we are dishes
left out for washing later.

the duvet
in a corner
thrown about
to rags
over our bodies. silverware
dismissed from service. a little stain
of ketchup.

Getting out of bed.

like getting out of bed
late at night to a fire alarm
from a cigarette in some-
body's kitchen – yes, I know
that do I
want to marry her,
but it's a wrench
to tell someone
you do.

Illness.

the dirt
calls out and opens,
takes you in
like poison on a gumline.

birches
born of earth
taste your body
and smoke blue,
grass
goes yellow
and opens like a clamshell.

dandelion seeds
whistle
and whip away,
carrying hate,
desperation and laziness
into forests,
haunted with beauty,
which have never felt such
haunting things.

summer ends
in death
like bones
gone moldy
and winter comes,
drops its duffelbag
and decides
it will stick around.

The world steams

smoking the cigarette
of a generous coworker,
my sandwich clamped under
one arm. it's a hot day
in august, but not
very sunny – the world steams
like an iron
on a somewhat damp
shirt. and the yard, too,
is mostly empty – a few cars, untidy
as torn-off buttons. I inhale, enjoying
the closeness of weather
and the distance of roads
and the mountains behind them –
this crumpled pile
of far off laundry –
our bedroom,
where you don't like
me smoking, its ruffled
and countryside
character.

The sandwich.

some ham,
white bread
and butter. I bite
the silver brick
and feel the evening
clearing. such flavour –
even without
the filling. this flatness
of cheap bread – 60c
at lidl. who wants
fishes;
all we need
are loaves.

Klaus J. Gerken

trust

i walk down a path
i have no commitment
the beauty of solitude
contains no resentment

what waits by the rainbow
is a puff and a huff
the body desires
enough is enough

harvest the honey
drink mead if you must
age is the darkness
in which you can trust

no empty solution
love is too real
but memory wakes
to a perfect ideal

as the dark sea advances
the bleached beach reveals
hunger and madness
for what is concealed

kjg 1246am 21 aug 2020

Post Scriptum

Klaus J. Gerken

dark

when at the end of the tunnel
don't look back
it's darker than the
darkest coal sack

no stars to remember
were they ever there?
there's a new horizon
in a black hole somewhere

i have written books
for no one to read
i have made an arrangement
to never quite bleed

those who have held me
held me in vain
once at the horizon
you can never go back again

kjg 1225am 23 aug 2020

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