

A R M S R I S E N A R M S

p r o t o H o u s e

G R E G M A R K E E

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MADISON

THE ANSWER TO DYING IN FRONT OF STRANGERS

The answer to dying in front of strangers
is a matter of introductions
and one last poem that he be known
as something other than audience

*The sky and clarity
daytime is a cloud is an invitation
and when the night the whorled and rested stars so too clarity
a reflection a spark I am beginning*

For which he had no answer to himself but silence
and time if moments
she was gone she had something to say and now she was gone
to her other dying acquaintances

AS ANIMAL

Amputation of the spirit
smoke is not a cloud smoke is smoke
and the elders can do no wrong but they do
and communion in poor company is no communion
nor the weather an answer to ritual
nor love is permanent I see

But to cause their disregard to cause pain
with no intention to cause their disregard nor pain
the helpless
and the obliged
and with no wickedry for thought
misfortune dwells within misfortune one and the next

Amputation of the spirit
age did come rapidly and left aside
those promises and those promises
and I do not know language any longer
except lust which is brief and spent quickly
and what I hold is proven theirs

Nor the forest nor the sea nor the air are pure
but are taken by humanity slowly certainly
and the lives will not be replaced
and death is no longer sacred nor earned nor passage
but to say the day is gone about for oneself
as animal

MY RAIN

My rain

I was already awake and dreaming

*An old familiarity old friend
gone picnicking at dry lake
like recency is a cloud
and the autumn colors the leaves starting*

My rain

midnight sometime it was

I was already awake and dreaming

and the rain pulled me from myself gently

*Drops and drops onto the dry earth
with a poof of dust each*

Drops and drops onto consciousness

onto the roof and then down the eaves

running and running nor thunder

the audible silhouettes of cloud patter

*My rain and belonging to something force
and in the west the sun
shown through smattered the clouds
rainbow*

GERMS

The God went out of him

replaced with germ and lice and infestation

social structure slow and deliberate ate away his being

swallowed his heart and called it owned

germs

of conscience and possession of commercial church

of loss the gone orders of permanence and belonging

and for every want every idea a black energy

like death but worse than death

gone is gone nor ever having been

The God went out of him

and left no language no trust no interest

and slowly crept into the indefensible soul

the heavy weight of systems and order and possession

and the last of faith is then a speck

a clouded speck of acting against everything

germs

for everything is cause nor him with control for

excepting his body he does not know why his actions

make sense to them and them

COMMERCIAL CHURCH

The engines of capitalism whirred
turned brands and thoughts into economies
spirited time into glass and ornaments
steel and faith and authority and language
from the quiet chapel of the office
his was advertising and causing need
removing the spots of indifference removing
the spots of Godliness with no physical attachment
history is reconciled in contract like promise
and were there explanation for the wind
no
nor the seasons nor coincidence nor life itself
but to say narcissism is needed
like courage is needed narcissism is needed
sponsors desire and the return of spirit

Calvin is smarter than lucky
pressed the button every morning
as his father did and as his father's father did

The engines of capitalism whirred
to life the drums of employment and responsibility
to life the numbers exactly and with decimals
to life the property of idea to material property
with pause for misdirection redirection the
calibration is honesty and learning
called education for a mold fitted neatly into
existence the same pattern as one hundred years
ago
industry is a house
industry versus despair industry is a house

NO MORE MEDICINE

No more medicine
it is all used up
the doctors continued to prescribe it but
it is all used up

The faculties came to order
set down their newspapers and
called law at things called rightness at things
recognized poverty and suffering

The copycat copied democracy
on a Xerox machine
used yellow paper today and said we are different
here

We allow fast cars and fast tractors
except in school zones weekdays
where the germs of self restart daily weekdays
at a pace

The student learned too quickly
had time to gaze out of the window
had time to forget
what color the day was

Lunch is a color and then it is done
and for the faculties tomorrow is different
maybe red maybe purple
maybe yellow is not used up yet

THE INCUBATOR

Just the right silence the right atmosphere
temperature
just the right confidence
the egg cracked and cracked and out came
the artist

Wearing a wool hat and a grin
already knowing how to sign her name

THE EVERFEAR

Hairy and wicked eyed long pointed fingers
and truth with braided beard
the everfear
he invented in poem turned against him in his head

He would write a second poem a superhero
that too could enter his thoughts and slay
the everfear
in truth and turn its language back to natural sounds

And it did slay
the everfear
claimed its language claimed nature and voices
stood silent above him

Imagination is powerful is gone
for reason
the everfear
he turned to nonfiction

Reinvented a voice cut his hair short
kept a calendar
opened the windows during the day
went on walks

Nonfiction brought back truth though brought back
the everfear
the superhero exploded one day
when he learned he could not fly

AUTUMN

Stems turn to brown flowers colored yet
the leaves
starting to come down upon the garden
hurry
to clip for a vase for the window saved the last
of summer
outside the greens do fade to earth
one and one the leaves make way for
barren trees
the grass is still green and the wind is change
gentle and different than
yesterday

THE MONITOR

Moved slow as not to make a sound
as not to disturb a subject
grew a tail for balance and with big eyes and soft voice
reported to committee
'peace shuffled from east to west and back again
and them silent and turning their heads to and fro and to and fro
and with cameras
said peace has no reference to war'
the monitor presented a picture of peace an image
of a land where there were no people a land
ripe for poetics for poesy and imagination
and he bent down unto his arms which became legs
and did not get up again
ambled to the chamber door and
with the voice he did not give up but never used again said
'good day gentlemen'

THE FREQUENCY OF LIGHT

The registered red the flower the cardinal
and the blue for sky
black is ink black is night black is sleep
death is black
privilege is a shadow
and sheltered from the sun sheltered from direction
the mirror is a shadow
the candle in a mirror is a shadow
reflection is a shadow I cannot touch
cloud is a shadow moon is a shadow

The day every color is a rainbow
out with the green for autumn without sound
[the green hibernates in brown]
soon white with the governed sky for snow
patience is white I remember until spring
when the greens are let out again [again]
the day every color
is a circle the rolling stone the rolling water
is a sun rolling through the sky and
the lesser moon rolling through the sky

A STONE IN MY POCKET

Arrest my heart, the one already still,
captured again by what I wish to be:
captain of a vessel, nor place but free
to go to go and answering a will;

and spend the weathered days as time as skill.
Follow the clouds, the horizon. Mem'ry,
I have been this way in your company
but your heart is elsewhere taken, fulfilled.

Arrest my heart, again, again, a call,
I am alone and know I am alone
nor wonder solitude in beauty's awe

nor fear I die having seen each the walls
of man and nature, carrying a stone
in my pocket as history and law.

O, FOREVER

O, forever, the booms and cheers, lightning,
birthday is a mark of being, and with
time for knowing that middle age is myth
to certainty for I am still growing.

I have not seen the evercause dancing
nor I expect, but celebrate herewith
instead nature. I give name each the birth'd
wholes, -claim language for little else I bring.

And where I have not seen I have not heard,
limits to say these are my bounds, that I,
I am among what turns without my force.

Nor word, nor sound of mine is to defer,
I am more aged and complaining to why
I am between speculation and source.

MORNING

Ever sunrise deliberate the east
and slow colors from the darkness where was
a star, the last of night, fading for cause
what is grander sunlight, becomes a rest.

Newly woken from sleep, alert, the nest
is done, and to take one's moment, a pause
to see the clouds' ended colors, allows
the full force of morning; and I for zest

with the spark of coffee and a patience
have already remarked what is risen
is completed as the last of yest'day.

And new I am to this, every hence
forward, a charge against the past, -listen
and sense, I am again sighted away.

THE TUNNEL

Belleville to Montecello Badger State Trail by bike 9/29/14

Old trains would
pass
the tracks now gone for pedestrians
connects
a farm city and a farm city
corn and soy right to the
municipal edges
the tunnel
between and long enough
for darkness black as black complete
and silent
shh
cool as night after a rain
old trains would pass
old engines and smoke
now there are roads
going around connecting
this and that

My tricked senses
unaccustomed to void

In and paced through the
light at the end of
the tunnel
out
and to the September wind
again
the falling leaves
the caterpillars and the fallen walnuts
out
into change

AUTUMN NEWS

There is no drought this year the grass is still
nor the birds have gone
the trees have started to turn
September is a word -for a word was needed
time is a breeze time is a rake time is a cocoon
time is harvest time is gathering time is red and yellow
the sun is late the sun is early
later and earlier
the moon is still the moon
the stationary moon the immoveable moon
the traveling moon
there is conflict in the desert [they must know autumn differently]
there is conflict between Europe and Asia
there is conflict in Missouri
there is an autumn election approaching
I know democracy
I vote I tell people I vote I have ideas I have questions and ideas
the weatherman would make a good President
the apples are done and ready for sauce
the strawberries are done are jellied are canned
O colors again o colors again
I am different this year I have taken time I have taken note of time
the athletes are mostly not troubled
the games continue
the earthquakes are unrelated
I will not dress for Halloween
I will not put bulbs in the ground
I will eat key lime pie instead of pumpkin pie
I will eat lamb instead of turkey
the clouds do not know autumn they continue they continue
I am winterized already I am always winterized
I have a good sweater
there will be a parade

SEASONAL ANXIETY IS

The inner tantrums of indecision
bold and separated and sleepless alert
the season is a tip to change
the shorter days and cold will come
the indoors will be my station
with windows for sight
nor anyplace a substitute for
the open which has been early autumn
which has been inviting and cause
for wandering and letting be the spirit
anyspirit
nor to blame the seasons alone for
the confines of being
just an adjustment to come as any
adjustment is required
change for prophecy change for the expected
and who can argue the next season's ness
such that winter is no frame
perhaps
though I must clear the past away
for so many reasons I must clear the past
make decision of indecision
with attitude for change which is no labor
because it is not
I remind myself
no labor to prepare for a conditions
which are not bad and
inwhich exists beauty and inspiration
as anyplace anytime
I remind myself

OVERNIGHT SHELTER

Homeless and weary
security
is shelter and the solved needs of being
troubled souls and bodies
a system is next
a step a system
first to clear the buried nets and circumstance
before walking again
homeless
and temporary
but solid for now and
room
moments

THE BRAIN IN A JAR

Is a manuscript
the brain in a jar
left for legacy that it be explained
his secret powers
the others had left written clues
but his
was measured differently for research as to how
he breathed underwater
[not really]
[but he frequently said such a thing]

RECYCLED WORDS

The news cut into little strips the words
rearranged and made into
a new story
no longer murder nor thievery no longer money
the words are a love story this time
a fertile island a bungalow
blue water and sky and
innocence
the guns and knives and accountants left on the floor

BELOW THE SURFACE

his tattoos were gills
his briefcase was a gill
his identity was a gill
the atmosphere is water
the buildings
shipwrecks the rowed trees seaweed
authority is a whale authority is a dolphin
knowing air
clicking and singing in tones
signing with sea urchin quill and squid ink
Poseidon was never so moved
as when
the submarine the airplane
let out the mariners at harbor
the ocean bottom Main Street
kissing one another
like fish
and one was hooked and
yanked to the surface
presumably to dine with the
CEO

CONVOLUTIONS

Buried in words convolutions the poems
without meaning they were not pearls as they had been
beaded one leading into the next no longer
a labor of language and stripped of relevance
and his own
once telling and insightful now a cancer of his day
spent time
convoluted and needy and without anchor nor hero
and a burden to audience
his turned to dare to them to continue to carry him
out of himself with no further advance nor magic
nor spark nor energy nor bravery
but a titled mess of words each
and he was otherwise silent nor listening for
inspiration appreciation dignification
convolutions and collections of convolutions he
never did return to the last nor the one before that
he was done and did not realize he was done
nor answer the question why
but to say identity is poetry
if this were poetry he could only convince the novice
in the beginning
like the low road for being
avoiding struggle avoiding love and affection avoiding
the concrete character of subject
because abstraction nearly reaches the surface of reason
enough to say that in his being
such that each is the same as the last is a mantra
and carries him timelessly
nor his were meant for others then he would acknowledge
a title is particular
and the rest is stolen or invented nor connected
to what they wished to hear as fed poems

A bed a chair
a stove
the nails counted for the roof
the table
doubled as a desk
near the only window

First snow
the pond not yet frozen
nor the leaves completed

The fences were not for the chattering birds
come and go with news
but for the people caught and refusing to eat
refusing change
wearing the only clothes they brought or issued scrubs
if it is wash time
the people talking in forms and symbols and images
trying poetry but not yet for the page
the political people with ideas nor with authority
the people lost in love
lost in their heart wondering forgiveness and
panacea wondering solutions
the fences were not for all of the people either
some come to stay
nor a difference to an open door and a closed door
but he had a secret
the voices mention deviance
and her's wonder where everyone went and
when they will return
the cardinal came to the yard
and the occasional blue jay
the basketball players playing horse did not notice
the birds brought cigarettes but no lighter
and the pretend and the practice
one day to walk away without fear
commitment is a lawyered mess and causes one
to wait
to listen for society [society is not everywhere]
nor the chapel is official [really]
nor the angels sanctioned [perhaps]
and the food is reliable the space is quickly known
and familiar

AMBER WITH INSECT

The golden amber
hardened sap
the caught insect within
and found
polished round into a setting
like a soft stone
set in silver a charm
held light
and stillness time
the insect was no longer captured
but death
wonders the soul of anything
the carried form in tomb
amber
charm
and with magic
curiosity is
a form a vessel without essence
I wonder

THE STARTED AND UNFINISHED DREAM

The started and unfinished dream
awakening to the middle night quiet it was
erotic and nameless
and pretend for retrospect is
rational and alone I remember
myself and a woman
that is all

THE DIVIDED NIGHT

Awake three times last night
the third is a cigarette and a transfer to the couch
to finish what dreams may come
how are dreams completed
without waking
I wonder nor remember
that is all

SLEPT THROUGH

Slept through the rain
no thunder I recall
black and still and puffy eyed morn
nor dream nor dreams
slept through sunrise slept until
I was done sleeping
slept until morning that is all

REPORT: SPINS THE DOOR

East is east then east is west again east is east
spins the door
the Tuesday election will decide if east should remain east
the lingual notions referendum may also
declare
red as blue and green as purple
though no discrimination can be allowed to those
driving said colors of automobiles one candidate's measure may
in fact
offer tax incentives to those driving brown automobiles
because brown is more wind resistant
leaving less of a carbon footprint
also in question
voters will decide on proper bedtimes and proper attitudes toward
elected officials
though these outcomes are guidance measures and
will not be enforced as
last year's election's measure of reasonable humor
in city parks
stopped the practice of panhandling by comedians was
enforced
the charged issue of language is the surface of
discontent
wherein previous English only measures disregarded
that all spoke English already and people
were playing games with elected officials
determined to manage language and social lingual development
spins the door
again
and new ambition turns day to night
but it is only temporary as language is a pendulum when
they do not agree nor they
excepting for their determination to retain a voice

THE TALENT OF

Being free when they said freedom
and some went to the mountains and some went to nature
some wrote a book
and some were bored and quiet
some said who said that
the talent of
being free when they said freedom
wondered who would say such a thing
who was an authority on such a matter
it has always been without question the nature of
doing as one wishes
the talent of
being free when they said freedom
was an act
freedom itself requires no talent just determination to
do as one pleases
he got the most out of his freedom
said the judges
about the nature writer sponsored by an equipment company
and sponsored by the camera company
the talent of
being free when they said freedom
was measured in dollars by the judges
for how else to quantify such a contest
for how else to measure heroes and inspiration
the judges were not candidates
they rescinded their participation in such a youthful contest
knowing categorically that they were free
enough
though there were some words they could not use
the talent of
freedom is a contest is a dare
and the others would come around

FORGIVENESS

Having damaged having harmed
having been damaged
having taken for having had taken
is not balance
having caused discontent having caused mistrust
for being discontent for having mistrust
is not balance
rather a perpetuative cycle of existence
nor blank honesty to compliment
when nothing is complimentary but
an attempt at balance
forgiveness and from myself nor linked to
my own wrongdoing
for favors
[shall I make a list]
and in the interest of preservation
comraderie and honesty between
nor with conditions

Said aloud

I forgive I forgive you

and believed

nor justice called forward
nor mind the idea of score
because I choose not to live with
anchors and lines and inner struggle
but to pause at my own error
like a lesson
step around for my own guidance
is character

FRIEND

They did not walk through fire
there was no fire to walk through
they were not silent
there were things to be said
and followed the course of change
together
eating lunches
into age