

Peripatetic Spiel

The wind shears across the empty park
like scissors through cheap wrapping paper,
scorching my ears and making the dog dance in frantic little steps,
and we go on past a stopped blue van marked "Ryan's Interiors,"
a bald, skinny guy in the driver's seat talking to his phone, or his hand,
but I'm betting on the phone, and then a shovel upright in a snow bank
where someone abandoned their driveway, for now,
and the postal van darts by, on the afternoon package route,
and my right testicle starts to ache, and there is a 98% chance
it's tumorous, and the sky is more bruise than blue and more black than bruise,
and I stop to breathe it all in and the dog keeps dancing,
and my testicle stops aching and the chance of tumor
recedes back to 0%, and a crow laughs at me from a picnic table,
and I know I'm not supposed to write poems like this anymore
because only 27 people read poetry these days and they
are bored with it but that's OK, I'm not bored with them,
or with the bob tailed squirrel skipping his way across the church roof,
I only wish you were here with me, because it will never
happen this way again, there was only just enough room for everything,
nothing sagged, nothing gaped, nothing askew, the plenum
was apparent and of course it was fucking perfect,
just like every other minute of every day, shooting forth like a shower of sparks.

Give'em Enough Rope

I went in search of devils and demons, not mine,
but fauna, a set of trading cards, Hummelware.
I put them under glass and walked away.

The road took me and I drifted a while,
believing, as drifters do, it was something rare:
to make selves anew, peel them off, and walk away.

Then home drew me back, something I'd left behind
felt immanent, a pole star. The demons were there,
and yes, each looked like me, but I walked on,

into the next room, into a box of toys lined
with black paper speckled with stars, then into the space
between the stars, past Atman, past Brahman.

I waited there for a visitor. None came, or I looked away,
and tumbled out of the box, the room, demon stares
now fixed on me. If only we all had a little more time.

The Mirror Ball

The paranoid stride, the walk of jabbering phone-bent stickmen
on their way to inner glow, to feeling all shiny and right
as they jerk past the ice cream truck, shimmy past the illuminati outpost,
because all is not right, all is dull, the world is filled with talktalktalk.

I know where they are going, I have gone there myself.
The shorter of the two once tried to rob me with a letter opener in the back,
made me feel so bad I gave him a ten-spot and told him,
“it's alright, we all go to t-bone's sometime, tell him I said hey.”

I have lived in many rooms, most of them near a dealer
of some drug or other. They're everywhere, as is sensible, as is right,
they offer derangement of the senses, and the senses offer
a curtain of rot spattered with joy. A fistful of bills gets you a packet of sunlight,

or at least, something to make those spatters of joy shine and wobble
and swell larger than is right. It's not god, it's just dope,
and there's a reason they feed it to child soldiers
before asking them to kill their families, there's truth in how it makes us dance.

Shake Back Your Hair, Let Go Your Laughter

Shake back your hair, let go your laughter,
throw your cigar at the preacher's red gums;
shit on the sidewalk, in daylight, in traffic,
sob in the midst of the playground's blue hum.

Ask boarded-up windows to give you advice,
go mount you a fountain, go bake thee a friend;
tell no one your mission, no, not even Christ,
he'd not understand, though he'd try to pretend.

Shake back your hair, let go your laughter,
sing if you must; if you mustn't, then bray,
and make sure your stink infuses the hunter,
make sure that he too becomes somebodies' prey.