

Dispatches from Americana

Sognare de Leon

The measure of the self against a shell in terms of spirals  
Of life, one thick vein as beautiful upside down for how you carried it  
Right side up or not, the shell, astonishing from all angles

My heights of you reached as spires, towards heaven  
High cathedrals swirling to astonishing coda  
Choirs of stone mounted on cliffs, dancing with waves

The abalone too conducts a chorus of kind:  
He clefts at the clay alone and builds up his temple  
His home he takes with him

I live in what I've built of you sometimes:  
Smooth walls in the texture of Goddess paradox  
Circles in the sharp shapes of angels sent to Mary

Bearing tides or tidings the waves have come to roost  
I sift them for bits of driftwood which I set next to the moat  
I dig deep enough to swallow the ocean

God's tears bleed from what vacated a nautilus  
I pick this up too, tilting sand from its wide mouth  
In my ear it sings but a few measures

Cacophony of storms and shelters and siege and sanctuary  
A familiar song, though, for which I have been waiting  
To blow in on some wind, or stowed on some ship

In a hollow, hallowed space it sings of treasures to be won  
Of fountains of youth and coins and cups  
Large enough to hold the spill of the human soul

## The Hammer

A little queen and a western swing  
A canteen at a ravine's edge  
A dusty-legged ledge of a man  
Trips into her full-fledged free fall

As she flings she from his arms  
His heart as Texas for her climes  
His belle chimes and frees his rhymes  
Descends as music, is melody

A southern comfort a soul clings  
Not to a body as a fly to a sledge  
At the peakish moment of its apex  
Nor to the song of a western singer

Mirrored meter (blue rhythm)

Two young black men so full of promise  
One a crook and one is honest  
The crook, he lives by rigid codes  
The honest one walks crooked roads

Who knows what acts may make upon them  
Derring-do or violence random  
They run along and play their roles  
In Time, who ledger-filled unfolds

Imminent designs on cloth  
That stretch into a wider swath  
Perhaps one thinks to grasp a scrap  
To tourniquet a moment's lapse

Perhaps, in vein, the other pats  
His mouth and places in his lap  
Another piece of errant garment,  
Curtain, napkin, wrapping, parchment.

## Monhegan

In a simple day  
At a simple time  
A bark embarked  
On a maritime chime

With a windful grace  
And a winsome kiss  
A ship's first mate  
Turned glass to mist

In the blink of an eye  
A stone skipped pond  
Turned roundabout  
The floatwood gone

And the fire was burned  
Anon in the church  
The kindling set  
In strips of white birch

A bride returned  
Dharma's own daughter  
To prepare a brass urn  
Down Darimiscotta

And wept as she did  
Resolve stronger came  
As child slept somber  
On what but a name

Wind as she weathered  
The harbor was good  
Where lashed by a mountain  
A handsome ship stood

A deckhand had faltered  
His will sent abreast  
His courage now fouled  
A hand to his chest

The fog now all cleared  
And prayers aloft  
Answered old mother

All bathed in blue cloth

Then soon with a clap  
And a flap of a sail  
A well-sated craft  
Aft and turned tail

What tell of this land  
Foreign and heathen  
That churchgoing men  
Espouse and believe in

Returned to a spouse  
Life had now hardened  
Like planks on a deck?  
For a humble sea warden

She's not put to wait  
Was murmured in circles  
As yields but a few  
Sun-somber cycles

Alas it was true  
She all but abandoned  
Dug heel to ground  
Surrounded by phantoms...

But to that blue lady  
See how she softens  
And goes round like wind  
In the hair of an orphan

Being black

The soft oppression of metonymy  
A hard confession on the concrete  
Tropical depression of the economy  
Sometimes it's hard being black

Blacks accused of miscegenation  
A blue and white led investigation  
Brown vs. the board of education  
Sometimes it's hard being black

Either dysphemism or euphemism  
News on a man's constitution written  
In an assisted living computer system  
Sometimes it's hard being black

A shogunate casts off a shogun  
A five-season six-year show's run  
A life-given Lemon, a theory homespun  
Sometimes it's just hard being black