

Benediction for a Graduate.

The May sun warms
on awakened skin,
your banner blows high
in the blue-washed sky.

This is a good day.

May the breeze favor you
and the sunlight over your shoulder
shine on all your steps.

May the keen eye of your voracious mind
mark such wisdom as is scattered in the vortex
like pebbles in the dust and shadow.

May your passage
be guided by those stones,
and may the brave thread of your thoughts
stretch across the horizon
like a net entangling and entwining
the warp and weft
of the unknown and unnamed.

Butterfly Horses.

The old lust for the thing that matters
dwindles to numbness under the daily weight,
leaving a boutonniere for the crypt.
Aim blindly, pierce between its ribs.
Butterfly horses, as my son once called them
are statues of Pegasus on the end of Memorial Bridge.
The unarmed Greek myth prancing riderless,
a circus pony arrowing down millennia,
to ricochet
off the old soul of a toddler in the back seat.

My wife told me this tale long ago
with glistening eyes. Her weariness after months of moil,
ground down by the long illness of her mother
and her death, by other mournings slung
like lightning bolts from Zeus,
was for a breath in the breeze of brisk new wings.
The fluid muses of archaic gods
seed the frozen stone before us.
Only the agile mind of a fool or a kid would try
to tip the turning mass of this tired rock.

The thing that matters goes unseen
into the spam folder, between love and fear.
We check our email while waiting
for a funeral to begin.
The ugly stallions stapled like twin tails
on the rump of the bridge
have a lovely name, Arts of Peace.
If they would come to us, those butterfly horses,
and guide us to their oasis,
then we could lap the water
before the empty eyes of dessicated gods,
gods at peace seeing our children
pierce the hearts of the things that matter.

Cavity

Absolutely go on to your blind dentist.
Let her illuminate the recesses
for her fingers to feel, sorting good from rot,
let her gracey curette pick
inside the lip of your inflamed gingiva,
let her play you in her imagination,
the web of veins in your yellow cheeks
against the steady enamel wall, the oceanic tongue
beating against the shoreline.
Let her help you find where you begin and where
you end.

When the shadow of pain falls across,
let a mask seal in
your breathing thoughts, the thin
nitrous oxide barrier all that divides
what is and what is not.
The x rays will miss them,
but let your blind dentist
see all the forgotten truths about you.

Let your dentist not be dead.
Let her live inside, you imagining
her hands playing over her ivory work.
If you do not know if she lives in you,
just know that her practice is not without paradox.
She knows nothing
unknown also to you, but she overwhelms
your nothingness, light mixing in darkness and darkness in light.
Every moment is a mystery according to her diploma
above the porcelain spittoon
silently watching over you, agape
and helpless, mourning your extinct cavity,
amen.

Strange World

What is the shadow of the mute Earth
If not a whisper to the deaf moon
About urges and erasures over eons
On continental canvasses, half-forgotten
Memories of volcanic torments
That could tease syzygy to lunacy?

That shading of the sun across the
Beaten lunar face silhouettes
The infant poem of a palimpsest,
Nursed on obliterating
Rain and wind, swaddled
In tectonic blankets.

The artful Earth shines over
Airless ageless craters and pocks.
The tired Moon, worn by abuse
counts up every tedious meteor blow.
Dead, cold and without too much hate
For that one agate blue brown eye
And its selfish unrequited love
That too intimate orbital embrace
After receiving a billion spring tides
gifting a few Apollo footprints
Such a mark is the Moon.

A warm-hearted amnesiac
Innocent enabler
The Earth turns over fresh soil
Each new day begetting
Extinction and birth
Of a new sun.

Every moment a fresh river

Benediction for a Graduate, Butterfly Horses, Cavity, Strange World

Runs into a new sea.

A flash of scales in water.

On coastal cliffs

What tiny shadows

are exalting the new Moon?