

Let It Sing

The pacing dog who expects her brew
by sun up
And the guy who'll want his cold
when the sail reaches the top of the
mast and the bells ring
The horse who has never seen a corner
because all her life she goes round
and round the mill stone
I will not despair
For the junk birds come each winter
and the song birds build nests
come April
and their music fills the morning
with glorious sound
Some call it the grind
But I will not be daunted
Onion grass, aconite, narcissus
Condensation, precipitation
drawn out by hand
on the wall of a child's classroom
Low clouds and high
A smell so deep
and yet still an inexplicable memory
was it a train, a janitor's hovel,
a mine shaft going down down
down into darkness
Dig with your shovels
Throw the seed to the ground
Put your coin in the slot
Pull the rope
And let it sing
Let it sing, let it sing
Let it sing

Woman Walks Into A Bar

There is a real estate of the brain
and I am engaged in single crop farming on my land
this allows for very little else to make its way into town

It's like a whole load of white people in an advertisement for
suburban living
the thinking is very beige
the furrows rather shallow
and the lack of results to be expected
slack, weak and one-note

Then those folks
hit the open bar
sunburned

It's like you've gone to Home Depot to inspect the rows of plants
oh gosh - so many
picked one that looks kind of intricate and tasty and suspiciously chartreuse
just to have that one single pot take over the whole damn acreage

So I'm popping Motrins at 3 am
all cause it looked good
but the music is always the same coming through the sound system and
the talk as well
something about tools on Aisle 9 over and over and over again
until you just want to barf

And then you do

On the chimneypiece is the real heart and soul of it
where brick and history come together
where the moment is as long as it takes to bend down
and set a match to the kindling
gathered oneself
like maybe the olden days
of sense and sensibility
not like the now-a-days
of broken glass

scattered on the floor
and threatening

The old saw
it *is* what you make it
the old saw
Old Grand-Dad
the old saw is hopeless against
the mirrored circular housing in an ET land
not ET himself
he was the opposite
it's where he landed that was killing him

If the brain has real estate but you allow it no pastures, no lanes
or swinging gates
no andirons, wickets and
no wood
only Makers Mark, IPAs, even the very finest Blue Label
the groove grooves into a weakness

Parched land

A slump

They'll bring out the buckets
the long-faced horses
and the hoses
but all the watering in the world
just makes that sneaky plant grow
in a world of white buttons in mud

Enough

So I've hired a young lady to dig it out and eradicate the mofo

I can see her from the window
she's quite familiar
in her jeans and flannel shirt

‘

Standing hip deep in compost
as soft as a feather bed
of possibilities

Oh Lord...

Oh Lord give her strength

Morning in Sicily

Coming down the mountains
of Sicily
hairpin after hairpin
through a mist of clouds and sunlight
with every turn
views revealed then stolen away
Until on the right
contained by a drooping wooden fence
a flock of sheep asleep
in the early morning sun
As I pulled over for
a closer look at their blonde curls
in blissful balls of sleep
and to take
a deep breath of lanolin and
dust
straw, shit and grass
their keeper, their herder,
their mistress,
their lover -
a dog the self-same color
awoke to the sun and my presence
squinted twice
then called out to me, at me -
Nature is God
God is nature
Can't you see, woman?
As the road slipped down to the valley

Showing Up

There was no parking near Silvia's
I went up a side street – eclectic cottages of stucco and wood
misted in lilacs
nowhere to park
But I did

A huge open kitchen, wooden banded seats from old trolley cars in Scranton (the sign said so)
I was here to get the money she owed me

Crispy charred whipped shredded pickled

I had a drink
Then doubled up (as she didn't show)
The seats were cool but uncomfortably expensive

I had reread the letter before arriving at Silvia's
it went on and on, rambling and ranting
what could have been summed up easily in a few brief sentences

I should never have sent it

What the fuck is Gochujong and/or Togarashi
and why had she chosen this place

There was no bread as I waited
Asians don't really do bread before dinner
So, I drank

That money I took from savings to help her buy a house
a house on a blind curve that friends dared not admit they hated
I felt dismal in it, wrecked when I awoke there
(despite those percale sheets)

Though, one should do anything for a friend
Lend money, hospital visits, pull a tick off where the sun don't shine
help an old mother die

Until...

There is a sinking defeat of judgement
when confronted by who someone is
if you only look
behind the curtain of accoutrement
and question
(perhaps what one has no right to question)

Such fury in response
Singed hair, the devil's breath on repeat
and that scratched flip side
va-vump, va-vump, va-vump

I cite a history lesson of
friends, clients, exes 1 2 3 4 5,
and hired hands splattered like legs off a broke-back chair
an obituary of humiliation causing
that feeling right before puking that death is imminent and a blackened hole
...with no bottom

I wondered where I sat in all this lineage
and it didn't look comforting
to see where it would end

I have no interest in *folie a deux*

But I shouldn't have gone on so in the letter
could have easily just done a WWJD thing
still, I'm waiting so why not have *une autre*

Then Bwana shows up
over an hour late
and five very blurry drinks later

With an envelope
early spring cashmere evening wear, thinning hair
aging posture and that fake English accent

We ordered
she stared at me with her twice-burnt rapier look
The food was excellent – I think

She pushed the envelope over
house secured
loan paid
meal finished

All of it...done

Why must I go on and on
Why not just stand up to people like that – like I parked the car – with backbone
and way fewer words
You don't show up *sempre* – buy your own damn house

A Windfall

We are all owed
few are paid
Yet when the letter comes through the postal slot
sailing to the oriental carpet
it lands like a ample flying insect

For my eyes only

Slit it open
the Noble Prize? I had no idea!
the winner of the Belmont
golly, really...
I'm far too zoftig to have ridden that thoroughbred - Cavafy
into a million dollars
and my whimsies do not constitute any sort of swag
not even a plaster bust of Mozart
on an upright piano

Oh, but you built a ship of sticks
and nursed an old lady who floated on a sea of confusion and dreams
houses, faces and dinners long lost off shore
You swept the home with pine needle bundles
and put together a wall of fitting stones
with a moat full of frogs and yellow fish
for a little girl
surrounded it with blackberries, gooseberries and currants
in a garden of apothecary roses

The papers that fly in are an oil bill
something to do with custody
the eye-darting shame of AARP's monthly magazine
and Highlights for Children (since 1946)
and the rare handwritten note from... anyone

There is no postal slot...

The mail thuds when Maria
the postal lady
tosses it to the porch
unromantically thrown with catalogs
Then a call comes over the line:
a recorded spectacular opportunity to Disney Land
from a lady named Lisa

Fame is a stick of incense
figure it out

The newt under the leaf on the path round the lake near the development where the
coyotes howl with anger and the beavers are trying
I saw a hummingbird moth
hermaris diffinis
That was a first for me

It was so big