

“Things fall apart here”

Delicacy of fragrance and color
Hurtles every flower towards its wilt.
The clock's running on every cell.
A world of unceremonious death.

Mountains rise and fall. Tectonic plates
May shift below them, dropping Rushmore
into the sea. Or they're smote by meteors like
One hundred million years of terrible lizards.

This sentence will end like countless before
And after. This pencil will dull, page crumple.
These meanings dwell in your mind
For the briefest time. Forgets by design.

I write words to forget them. An answered
Question will nag no more. A mind emptied
Of its contests is at peace. Forgotten
Is a place large enough for all of us.

“See a Movie”

I want to see a movie
Where an adult living alone
Wakes up one morning
In the future
But discovers this only slowly
In other people
Because so much of the world
Looks the same.

No spaceships.
No robots.
No aliens.
No humans living lengthened lives
On distant planets.

For in the future
None of these science fictions
Will matter
When compared to how well
We treat one another.

Our protagonist will fall
In love with everyone
And everyone with them,
Only to wake the next morning
In their own time, in their own bed,
Full of loving determination
To make art that shows futures
That will draw us in.

“Frog”

I happened upon something
On the path.
A dead something.
A frog on its back,
each limb splayed outward
against the pavement,
each died its own tiny death.
Some organs were drawn
from its belly,
bloating too big
to have been carried
by this diminutive creature.
How could it have leapt so high
with its body encumbered
by so much flesh?

“Shrimp”

A poem a day
Keeps the devil in place.
That I might come

To understand him.

They speak of eschewing the devil
Like deveining a shrimp.
I can't cast out my evils
Any more than my own bones.

The deeper the roots
Into the ground
The taller and wider
The trunk and the crown.

"Black Fist"

I wished my fist was Black as Tommie Smith's
When I posted him on my wall. He knew
He'd have to run fastest on Earth to catch
Freedom's promise, to wait on America,
To secure a few minutes of telling the truth.

What else did he know?
Did he know it would be silkscreened?
Soundbitten? Emblazoned? Bronzed?
How streets would sprout fists? Millions of variegated hues
Passing batons around mahogany statues
That no olympian could lift?

Did it matter? Did it matter when
He ran from 1950s Texas to Mexico
On America's behalf? When a Black man
Nods at me now, I know something
Of the weight he carries.

"We were just human beings," he said.
Ain't that the truth. When you're fast as Tommie,
That's all you need to know. Because the layers
Can't be held. The knowledge must be simple
Enough to fit between clenched fingers
To squeeze between our ears, to lodge in our chests.

I can't know what Tommie knew. He carried early.
Freeing us from knowing lines he crossed.