

Boys of America

Most are from the slurbs
once ago their neighborhoods
held a promise that whispered
into obsolescence
and you can almost understand
what makes them angry.
Their heritage degenerated
under the weight of withered expectations –
bright hopes eroded by the mighty
light of grandeur, ethereal at the moment
but haunting in the end
for promises die hard.
Flux isn't good for a little mind
and neither is cascading
down a Slip and Slide
from suburbia to a tenement.
It makes one project physical expectations
onto moral ones, too readily
like a boy eager to don a uniform of war,
if only for an innocent night of Halloween.
Reality gets lost in the transformation
and what he knows to be true
takes a backseat like a naïve virgin
to what he wants to be true.
The virgin isn't exempt,
don't think it's a gender thing –
she knows where she is going
and who is driving and she likes it
because it's what she's been led to believe.
We're all victims of how disappointment

ossifies our little minds
and we get shrewd and selfish
and grasp for what once was a golden ring
and cling to a promise of better things
if we take seriously our form of
propagated gender-specific control.
Unfortunately, as we grow to men
we remember too cruelly
who on that playground in Middletown
was in control and we seek new ways to
obliterate that image.
We close our eyes to progress
like a child playing death squad,
ten-years-old with cloth around our eyes
and a cigarette we can't yet smoke
dangling from our mouth.
Our naiveté is charming
and if we are clever enough
others will make us their leader
so we can fool them, too.
Some of us go to the pulpit,
others to the power
a rare few to the pen.
But in the beginning
we were common boys of America
playing familiar roles that only later
splintered into the multi-headed beast
that weary kids pretending Halloween
can only grasp – masks torn asunder by a
lustful need to know from where we came
and who would be in control
of where we ended up.

In a sense, we are born to be angry
striving to reconcile bitter truths
and shameful expectations
with our course to come to a violent head
under a common moon.

Glow

The little bugs I used to capture as a child
 did nothing to illuminate my future;
for if they did I surely would have gone
 the way of cattle with their necks sliced cleanly.
Remarkably I have no regrets yet also muster
 incredible sorrow over situations reminding me of
a bad sitcom, amused by the laugh track
 strangely aghast the quality was so bad.
Sorrow for oneself isn't a sin but an indulgence
 like a Cartier watch I couldn't afford
but had to have with all those damn knickknacks;
 time a luxury I couldn't buy without selling too much.
Looking back at fireflies I am amused by their novelty
 yet strangely affected by their resonance.
What shone before me wasn't their untimely demise
 but my own history captured in a fragile glimpse.

Skyscraper Windows

I stare out skyscraper windows
into the most gorgeous shade of blue;
drops down as if blanketing the
excrescence on the rock -- possibly a mountain
more likely a hill, but I am no geologist.
I'm an office worker who trolls the
corridors wishing to be a trowel so
my every movement would create the
illusion of bounty behind me. Instead
I leave gas and wonder about asbestos.
The quote-unquote hill wears the Hollywood
word as if a bracelet like the one I gave to a girl
when I was 12 and eager to be accepted
and spent a whole week's allowance --
five dollars and a dollar saved before --
to give to her that chrome-plated nameplate.
I stare out the window and try
to absorb the beauty but the unmistakable "buzz"
of my modern equipment leaves peace of mind a fey idea.
Fluorescent particles rain down on me
and my eyes constantly ache and I
long for the natural beauty outside,
a world that's always busy
with the boxes delivered to others,
Christmas comes early for some!
I peer out from the nestle of my cubicle,
keeping me in, I feel a bit like a pig
needing a trough, not a view.
I occasionally fail in my attempt at avoidance
and catch sight of myself in the reflection

of the skyscraper window
and recoil at the senescence so pronounced.
Has it really been that long, the buzz
from my computer asks, since my youth
and how did it slip away?
The fluorescent burn has me drawn and copper
reeking as if a glowing penny in a fire.
How amusing, the worthlessness of a penny,
the enormous space it takes compared to its
relative worth!
Sometimes behind my back, I feel
the gelid gaze of my clock-watcher, the
self-proclaimed wardeness of the
rat-like maze. Before when I was sentient –
when I could feel, think, dream, become –
I would close my eyes and imagine she too
saw the beauty of a hand with the
Hollywood bracelet, flailing about a pool
while doing laps in the most pristine of blues.
Not now. No, she checks my every movement,
very little now, and I feel the whisker of a
breath behind me,
cloaked in jalapenos and bitterness
as if the whole of her was pickled and waiting for
a time to be devoured just right.
I hear her breath over the buzz
and I know she's imploring me to become
the beast of burden I know she thinks
we all should resign to become.

For a Little While

Don't judge me because I once lived in a plastic bubble. It was around the time I was force-fed hot sauce for talking shit. I was a menace at age 4 before I was socialized and little girls chased me because I had a blonde cowlick and pure soul and they wanted to eat me. My tongue burned so bad I licked dew off the neighbor's swing set as my smog lungs nearly killed me and they put me in the rectangular plastic thing that was not really a bubble and I could see the rippled images of New Zoo Revue and I can't remember if I poked holes in it but I probably did because I was a foul mouth terror and when the rectangular "bubble" didn't work and death came for me in the hospital I tore paper off my crayons and stuffed it into the tube to stop the manufactured air that tried in vain to clear the smog from my lungs and the man blessed me and I asked him when this bubble pops will there be evil little angel girls to eat my pure soul and he said I don't think they do such things to naughty boys with blonde cowlicks and the doctor came into the room and declared it was an ancient vestige in my body that filled me with junk, not the smog, and I turned to the man who blessed me and asked if that meant I'd be stuck in this peculiar bubble and he looked at me sadly and said,

“For a little while.”

Equinox

It must have been amazingly blissful for the briefest moments in let's say the 50s, for a large part of America. When the enemies were black and white and money flowed and life was decent and simple and there were no hard-core drugs or street gangs. It was all a lie, of course, the fallacy bred its own splinters of discord... the glass house couldn't stand forever without its cracks sending shards into preaching hands willing to reverse progress in the name of empty platitudes and halcyon dreams on tongues like body wafers. The neighborhoods with unlocked doors and shattered housewives hooked on Lucy before she jumped the shark... the smell of apple pie and Marilyn under flashlight covers to Elvis that his older brother and friends gyrated with their pompadours after poodle skirts. Whiskey smells on the men who flew planes filled with babies where the people smoked with abandon to the destination that was its own secret, ruled by starlets and Mafioso grins. Recovery from war and the fake flag erection with money flooding from the sky in ticker tape parades to honor not the living but the soon to be deadbeats of cunning corporate cowards. It sounds bad when you put it that way... but for some as long as they were white straight god fearing middle class... it was an equinox like no other, the harmony of light and dark, the median when everything was just right...