

the Unrorean

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The reeds didn't move at all.

the swan could have died of something contagious
but the drunks who stood by the canal
still stood there
and watched as it floated, still,
where it had drifted to
caught in the corner between the lock and the
shore
and it stayed there,
still as the canal water
because there was no breeze.
and the reeds didn't move at all
and neither did the tree branches,
though maybe it was just the aspect of the funeral
made it seem that way,
and I was fifteen years old,
and just walking by,
but I can remember looking at those two
brown
and sunscarred
faces
so sad
like wrinkles on the walnuts my father
used to crack into the threads of the carpet
from between the heels of his shoes
ten years earlier
and they looked less broken than the swan
and as still
and more sad
and the grass was suddenly green
as layers of shredded plastic
and the sky was as blue,
and it was summertime then,
though perhaps dipping into autumn,
and I remember that I only looked for a moment
at the swan
because the idea
of standing for any time
within the fresh stink
of those two unhappy men
appreciating that
perhaps contagious
death
of something that had been beautiful
would be more
for a long time
than I could
possibly bear.

—D.S. Maolalai

Every body is
a lean machine designed for
death. Enjoy the ride.

—Coco de Cassza

Devin McGuire, Editor
Cynthia Brackett-Vincent, Founding Editor

Appeal for Winter

Remind us how our bodies understand
December, how frost is fire and night
a circumscriptive blanket. Take our hands
and tell us of unraveling. When half-light

through tightened curtains finds us, we recall
divested birch and how our parents suffered,
the sounds of their contrition in the hall
outside their room, how even then we muttered

appeals, if just to stay the break. Remind
us how all love will leave us lost and brittle,
useless at last, how waking late we'll find
the kitchen chilled, bled dark, an empty kettle

on the stove. Tell us, frozen then, to bloom
with thanks for love, for suffering gone too soon.

—Danny Dyer

When

the bricks were cracked to the song of doves
red plumes burned the sky full of glass,
gunshots on the street at eleven, again,
my heart a shoe, beating my spine,
her hand grabbed his throat in the heated dark
sidewalk empty of light and air
those days when her husband wore silk and thorns
and his breath burned night to diamonds
ghost trees beside the highway
her red hat, her backward shoes, her gun

—Kelley Jean White

Blue Hour

for Minori

The love that lies by you
sleeping deeper than the morning
you're unsure you want to wake at all.

There will be need for that later,
when the sun glares through the window
like a Benedict preceding a nosy fork.

For now, lie there yourself,
suffused with the fine silence,
day's encroachment only tingling your pores.

—Matt Stefon

Waiting in Vain

It's a voluntary widowhood.
Whipped by Neeli's tongue,
he's gone to harvest Dirhams*
in Dubai desert – lest the embryo
of their new home won't grow up.
She's alone in a temporary shed
behind the basement on the bank.

Indian Postman passes by like her
days flashing 'No' with his fingers.
She looks into the distant desert
through the window of nostalgia.
Fear creeps on the walls of her
heart at night - even a Norway rat
becomes a ghost rattling in kitchen.

Years slip into the chasm of past
leaving behind the doldrums on her
countenance. Time partitions her
basement – mongooses, bandicoots
and rats get their shares – holes and
chinks. Now her dreams with streaks
of love have shrunk like her womb.

*Dirham – currency of the United Arab Emirates

— Fabiyas M V

dystitular maharajah

day of awe gone pancake

Swami boatman
Ganges ashes

Varanasi rimpoche
ricochet bumper
car pinball
spinorama

ex cathedra
Francis X. Foreigner
mordantly funny
humdrum
booby
trapped armored Jeep
creepers IED

let it rip
American Embassy
abracadabrocide

— Gerard Sarnat

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The way her blonde hair looked in the morning

**Editor's Pick*

In the morning she had got my computer on
and she had deleted a whole sheaf of poems off of it
and was reading through the rest
with her mouth a bit open
and the pyjama bottoms riding up on her legs.
“What the fuck are you still writing poems about her for?” she said when she finally saw I was awake.
“‘It’s been months and months
and you’re still writing all these poems about her.
You told me you were out of love anyway,
you said it was all finished and done with. What the hell
are all these poems for then? The way her blonde hair looked
in the morning
with her back stretched out against you?
What the fuck is that?
I know that isn’t about me. What, were you going to try and get someone to publish these?
Did you think I wouldn’t read them then?
I know you think I’m stupid,
do you think I’m so stupid I wouldn’t even read your poems?
What? Is that something you think that you can just do to people?
Make them fall in love with you just so you can piss down on top of them
while you’re spending your evenings
writing poems about whatever way her hair looked?
I told my friends all about you, you know, I told them everything,
even my mother knows that I’m not a virgin any more.
That was something important I gave you, did you not realize that?
How can I give anything of myself to someone who isn’t in love with me?
How can I be with someone who loves someone
else? Well?
Say something you fool, don’t just lie there and look at me.
How can I be in love with you anymore?”
She got up then, and walked over toward the door, her pyjama bottoms settling themselves
back down over the brown skin of her calves. I couldn’t stop looking at her pyjama bottoms.
Not at her legs, just her pyjama bottoms.
They moved like sticky fabric around her, they clutched her skin and my eyes
and meant I didn’t have to look up at her face.
I really tried to explain then
about how these things just come out when you’re sitting down to type them,
how half of it was fiction anyway, more than half of it, almost everything
hell, I’d probably make fiction even out of what she was saying now
when I’d thought about it for long enough,
whether she stayed around or not.
I said I thought she was wonderful, and yes, I sometimes thought about the other woman,
but that was remembering, that was remembering when I was in love.
It wasn’t being still in love, it was something else.
I said that I didn’t know why I wrote anything I had written.
I said I was sorry.
She didn’t want to hear any of it. Or she didn’t listen, at least.
Her hands were going crazy on the elastic of her pyjama bottoms
and her mouth tossed off curses like a sailor abandoning barrels in a storm.
She kept picking things up from the table and the counter top and putting them down again,
not throwing them or anything, just looking at them and turning them over
and then putting them back where they had been.
“Sorry? What am I going to do with fucking sorry? Sorry wont give me back
what you took from me. Sorry wont give me anything back. Sorry isn’t anything.”
English wasn’t her best language and it came out when she was angry.
I got up and tried to hug her, tried to calm down her tiny body
if nothing else, before she fiddled the whole room to death.
Empty bottles banged against our feet as we moved ourselves around the bed
like dancers, her trying to get me off her, me trying to hold her still.
“I know that you still love her”, she said, looking up at me. “I understand.”
Her eyes were so sad. The other girl would have had angry eyes. I wished she had angry eyes.
“Just tell me”, she said “please, do you please love me too?”

—D.S. Maolalai

Bacchus

After the mourners leave,
we separate his body, shoulder blade from clavicle,
sternum from stomach, ligaments we spool
like yards of silver cord. The grief abates,
but modestly. Without a will to state
how we should act, we pass out articles
of him—a lukewarm heart for Mama, pulled
apart by sufferance; his lips conveyed

to us, his maenads. When we’re nearly finished,
we come to what we can’t resign away—
our father’s laughter, water in his eyes,
the imprints of our mother’s teeth that blemish
his knuckles. Left to settle this estate,
we bathe our hands and let that ache subside.

—Danny Dyer

When Your Life

When your life mushrooms
in your earth-wise field
near the windy dunes
of your hiding place
which whisper
from a sheltered sunshine
words of an excited embrace
stolen from your diary
and you listen to bird song
in a belated pleasure
which holds you today
to the retracing
of that desire,
if only of that echo
of a past tenderness
were not a lost mirror
in the pockets of memory
of your lover’s shabby coat,
it may be time to listen
to the ash trees
once again in your face’s tremor
amid boughs and branches
in this blushing brief sun shower
making no noise
yet rain falls on every leaf
in the woodland foliage
as a whitetail deer stops to eat
motioning his nostrils
in the taunting soft air,
you ask to live through
a trackless field
to locate a pointed path
you were once guided to
you wait without a map
clustered by a lover’s quarrel
for a noontday welcome
without any more suffering.

—BZ Niditch

Notes on Meditation

1.

—Michael Meinhoff