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Haibun

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Haibun

Drinking Lethe-eau from one spring
Mnemonsyne-water from another,

like wine and coffee, opposite greeds
alter the micro balances in the banlieus.
Up and down, up and down
or open and taut, open and taut,
the sand pendulum pattern of Lissajous figures
makes a *here* always
slightly off-center from the last stroke.

It is unseasonably warm here and the leaves stayed on the trees
for the longest time—even stayed green—for a long langorous
autumn, almost a case of arrested development.

Then talk to about silence, in silence.

A glass of water, a slice
lemon.
Golden mountains, silver moon.

At every moment, there are oddities of the journey.

Thursday: found great offense.
Sunday: fountains withdrew.

Dark and somber dreams of walking,
low song clouds
in unbecoming places.

* * *

"Ever notice tiny specks or strings darting in and out of your
eyes? The Mayo Clinic Health Letter says that although these
semi-transparent bodies, called 'vitreous floaters' are annoying,
they don't affect vision."

Reassuring.
Convenience store
dead air, Flav-R-Pac
salts it.

The trip, the trek, the record, the haibun-ordinary
details: a high wind, 11:50, blew all the papers off the table
when American haiku extruded from the texture

walking
thinking
bitterroot
beebalm

Three blanks, beginning middle and end
Two blanks, thesis and antithesis
Thirst in every direction.
But one learns not to watch
the stately randomness of unaccountable figures.

* * *

I wear some clothes of the dead, and eat some of the food left in
their cupboards, Vermont maple syrup talismanic, a soft
summer nightgown, use a hanky with an "E." The clothes
survive, and float up onto this shore rather than some other,
some sour thrift shop rummage sale,
and buying I've had fine linen handkerchiefs, with initials
"WTN" random finds
some dead man's debris
living on after him.
And are there many clothes strewn in the street
Where I walk to work
A pink polyester sweater.

Where?
at close range.

* * *

The street man pushed his doctored shopping cart ahung with
stuffed and puckered Hefty bags. Dangles from the front, one
plastic wink, a bubble "California Raisin."

And the starling, junk bird, slammed into the brick wall during
the storm? Stiff and dead. Cartoon dead, feet out, x's for eyes.
And the grey dog exploded on impact on I-95?

Glisten of bright glass bits. Buffer sofa in the waste spaces, the
many dulls of brown, brush twist total. Denial and remaking.
The little squibs unseen that float thru on the side, travelling out
of the frame. Here, the first 200 patriotic customers will receive
FREE American Flags.

I should use pentamenteur line, and organize things better.

* * *

Experience what the locals already know. Networks of
reminiscences in the reading, constructions of *deja vu*, lush chaos

transparencies of the scattering—it is so blown away that it
appears hardly at all, even the residue is invisible, hardly a trace.

So there is no pure art, just something sliding over the site
between the illusion of realism and despair, grappling for a
foothold or handhold, every
mark
is made in time, time that is not spent almost weeping
and work work work
like 7 dwarves
all for the moment
of falling away.

Transparencies and opacities slide across each other, pick out
each others' figures and grounds. Words are there, also shaded
drawings, muted myopias, floating smudges of mist, brown
spores fine and invisible as dust shot off by a little fungus called
the earth star. And crossed sticks.

Widen what's wide.
Narrow what's narrow.
Don't bring it to the middle, intensify its reasons.
Some things, when ripped,
need to be ripped more.

* * *

At 10th and Montgomery, the glass smash where I walk
to work, the recurrences of dreck, where I crackle the debris
step by step, a sparrow tried to fly up to a linden grappling a
doughy crescent of pizza in its beak. Which it had to drop,
the choke of crust too heavy

An octave above
what chord?

be asking why am I here, why here, why this, why these bonds,
why this matter, these little bits of matter *me* and *it*, and

"the void-strewn firmament"

in which the biggest statue of a Holstein
here to be seen
rises on a bluff over New Salem, North Dakota,
look left,
I-94 travelling west.

* * *

Being polygeneric, why did all your work behave as elegy?

The landscape bare, without
consideration, without qualities.

"Who are you?"
"I am nomad."

The arking reach of sky, the starry bliss, dew of light, prolix,
unimaginable but present, in which the traveller wrestles with
flashing visitations of vector

Quick rumpuses of solidity
Intercept the endlessly porous.

The Milky Way is "ours" and even we are to the side of it.
And every cell flies up and cries *hark arc*. And "me" a little
blown dust weed seed
whistling, so does it matter if it rise or fall? silvery fibers afloat or
sodden?
No matter how, which way, or why
we drown in the aura of our own joy.

* * *

One can see why, though, the myth spoke of a Call, "your name
here," sounded by a Them or The from cruxes
of silent bowl-shaped spaces:

Something definite, so to speak.

Twinkling planets
night trees net,
the fireflies drift, the stars float
as green-bright meetings just above our breath.

There are marks and markers even in the flattest waste places.
On my driveway. Stunned by a few twigs, a dead beech leaf,
some crumbling asphalt shadowy in the streetlight. Whose
name did they call? I answered *here am I*.

But who are they? And make a small mark and then, blessedly
(though sometimes the "I" is unrepentant, annoyed),
it
is swallowed into the void.

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by Rachel Blau DuPlessis