We Too

By

Tyler David Sherman

Submitted to the graduate degree program in English and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts.

________________________________
Chairperson Joe Harrington

________________________________
Chris McKitterick

________________________________
Phillip Drake

Date Defended: May 9, 2016
The Dissertation Committee for Tyler David Sherman

certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

We Too

________________________________
Chairperson Joe Harrington

Date approved: May 9, 2016
Abstract

A collection of poetry which explores the notions of global climate change, gay sex, and class war as speculative nightmarescapes of varying degrees of reality. The formal breadth stretches from metered quatrains to projective verse and hybrid genres to asyntactical faff.
Acknowledgements

For the record, I’d like to thank: Joe Harrington without whose generosity of attention and capability to be critical without my hating him this would not have come to be; Tim Lantz, whose poetry, prose, and work ethic are an intimidating inspiration; and Will Cunningham who likes my work even when I do not.
Table of Contents

Forward 1
Shitting on Bluebells 3
a Bunny 4
It Is Quite Gross 5
Bros 6
Dead Robin 19
Abstruse Goose 20
the Outbuilding 21
the Problem 23
Two Fingers 37
Nothing Was Beautiful and Everything Hurt 38
Paper Butt 42
Very Bloody 43
Corpse Jet 45
Die Young 46
[Cusp’d, fingertips.] 47
Anal Dilators 48
Antelope Butte 49
the Metacreature Bloom 50
Mold Sea 61
Works Cited 73
Forward

Right now, at least, I’m thinking about myself as an anti-sophist. Although it often seems to a popular audience (and let’s face it, sometimes they’re right) that it is the job of writers to make lies seem reasonable, I want and try to be a writer who makes truths more visible and thereby seem far less reasonable. Why? Well, that’s complicated, and I’ll try to make stabs at it here, but if I’m of any use as a writer it will become more clear when you read the work itself.

It seems to me that much of what we do and say is demonstrably false. Climate change is a great example of this. People who pay close attention to facts and try to keep their fears, and prejudices, and preconceived notions at bay can easily see the sort of pickle we’ve gotten ourselves into. And while attempts to avert disaster are of course admirable, they leapfrog what is a very serious question, one that is not as penetrable by facts but no less so by truth (as it were), which is whether we as humans deserve to have our crisis averted.

I grant, it is a not at all pleasant thing to consider. But if we (and as poets who if not we) can deign to personify what would ordinarily be considered “non-intelligent” it is undeniable that evolution has dog-eared our page, as it were. Of course precedent to this idea is whether or not human’s ability to fuck everything up is a “natural” process which upon closer inspection turns out to be yet another recurrent outcropping of the same fractal whose name is Not Thinking About Unpleasant Things. Obviously self-injury and its consequent sublimation of avoidance are not confined to “nature.” Gender and sexuality have left many bodies in their wake; of particular relevance to me as an ineffectual gay man. Class, power, and their antecedent wealth poison nearly everything, also of particular relevance to me as a mostly unrepentant poor socialist. These all belong to the category of truths that I am interested in forcing a reader to confront.
I should try to speak more plainly. (Don’t get yer hopes up.) It is my goal to hurt feelings and to make the hurt exquisite. But at the same time to make evident that this indictment is all-inclusive. I am as bad as you, worse even. And so, straight up, just the facts: this manuscript is a catalog of the ways I continue to get things wrong. I think you probably get them wrong too. Recognizing that is the first step. It’s why I offer up myself as a bad example. Accepting it is the next step. In aiming to do that I try to position myself on both sides, because our faults always seem more tenable than those of others. “They are wrong. We too, are wrong.” Or so the thinking goes.
Shitting on Bluebells

Who determines inadvertency?
Square pegs in ground holes. Spring
puts dumb flowers up through
plant offal and dirt. And we
luxuriate, get down close on
our haunches, insist on a likeness
to those flowers.
a Bunny

I scared away
a bunny, saw
it flop through
alley underbrush
like an overlarge
bit of cardboard
blown through a
car park.

We see this a
lot in places
where small
creatures are.
Hell, I saw a
rabbit every once in a while
in Chicago. Doing
that furtive thing
down Clark Street,
north winds having
chased it to
a derelict boystown
    from Lakeview.

Nothing to say,
really, or that
saying means as
much as thinking
to a rabbit.
Thinking that
we’ll both die, but
it sooner.
It Is Quite Gross

No humble end to Crufts dog life.
Breathing tough b/c the face is all
Smushed up past the lupus snout.

Weedling the viable wheat out so
We can make chaff bread, so rustic,
& rely on air-yeast to leaven it.

Clumps of dog fur fluffed off
Collecting under the bleachers,
Sloughing viability like dog tear stains

To “pet safe” bleach squirt
Bottles and functional love
Conditions. As though the bread

Were unleavened and an early
Agrarian life were not core
Strength and unseated dressage.
Bros

Such like as bros
being bros being..
It is too, too much
food,
laughing gas,
depilaments,

This will inevitably come
to an ask that we all see
broness in us. Fat
chance. What is that?

Small bottles of Pepsi connected
to tiny ones of Captain Morgan.
Making Everything sound Important.
Confronted with Dichotomy of
Orthogonal Devices, making
a determination

and then living their life
That Way. They

clotting out of a frat house,
being really earnest and pragmatic,

frustratingly,
but in a way that
takes advantage of a lot.
Like that

mythical couponer

who rolls out
of the supermarket with a cartful
of food and a check from the grocer.
Wearing the
widest leg khakis
that J. Crew makes.

maybe a jean shirt, too many
buttons open it's being August humid
or clammy September, no matter.
Brusking the
unseasonable
temperatures and changing
Them.

What

problems lie ahead:

Accidentally bringing
two women to one pre
tailgate thing,
flash ing a Little Ball
through lax shorts care
and happenstance.

Finding five bucks. Finding
another five bucks
and thinking you’ve
earned it.

And whatever,
but your having ten bucks.

_________

Wherewithal
hungover

low and coming
back up in eating a lot
of tacos. Being beered.

One bro
as representative
resigning
to The Weekend
 of a Tuesday
 and
 a Wednesday morning, and
 etc.
 holding to
certainties 
 which 
 feel good, and’re
 easily communicated
to other Human Beings.

Bro Code is:

1. Get fucked up. Insofar as 
 life is short
 and heart disease will kill us all 
 if cancer doesn’t.
 2. Fuck anything
 that gives permission,
 and would not cause derision
 Who is tacit in their giving,
 so the earning’s earned.
 3. Consider brotherhood
 in achieving 1 and 2, in
 sloppy seconds and in
 boggartry.
 4. Clean up pubic hair.
 5. Call your mother, her
 as first bro, your lesbian
 parents, keeping things
 clean, having a house.
 Carrying the heavy heart
 in mesh short cloth as
 quiet desperation with no
 tongue tip to cut the word
 from the aire motivation but
betting heavily on nostalgia, couch-fort grab-assings and 64 bit videogames.

Perhaps putting too much stock in it, but still stocking it for a common language if Nothing Else, but so much else.

That we all die alone, but had, once,
something to come home to.
And that has made all the difference.

And I’m leik whet!

One wearing boxer briefs and a poncho,

having emerged from baby fat to burgeoning muscle skin, &
living Like That. A bro

averts his gaze, carrying so much under a tee shirt as to impede lateral movement.
No biggie, we all learning.

Some to do more with less and some the opposite.
Resolutely stepping on
a dozily moving wasp
that is larger
    than life size.

Possibly some hive monarch,
    spring rut
from     flat grass and cold dirt.

    Perhaps no
things are universal, like
morals or spite.
    Striking hot
because the opportunity
presented itself.

    And not

entirely malevolent,
    but not fine.
    That interstice
    and the effort
of its maneuvering.

How having money
    often
works the same
    with those moral objections
a class of conversation
    and not discrete
speech acts.

Ode on a canvas flip flop
and puka shell choker wreath
clamboring the steepled
roof of a frathouse and a
Contented Americanness.

    Being a raconteur
embodies
    some of this:
    performative iteration


making no additional meaning,
indexical slippage, squaring
being part of something greater
and living a single life
of justifications and happiness approximate
-ness

There is a time and place
for violence, yes.
So too,
for broing.

So too for sybaritic explosiveness
in a common place for its expression
from whence myriad juvenile ejaculates
commingled in a collective cookie base,
now old,
forgotten in office and
worksite,
relegated
to custody
of Fishwife.

_______

Three freshman sitting
on a retaining ledge
over the quadrangle
their legs
dangling. One
thinks of pushing them,
first the six feet.
to the ground
then
down the steep hillside,
which abuts it.
Wearing a cheap plastic comb headband,

holding ones hair back at the hairline in a hundred little bunches, which reform to a florid swoop in the back that moves in night volleyball played shirtless, as an aggression. Oppositional to sixty eight degrees of dew beginning to collect on horizontal surfaces.

Having a beer, but counting the calories.

Torrenting what is supposedly the First Three episodes of the new season of Game of Thrones from an open wifi network called linksys.58C while a lost pink nylon coat gets put on a bike rack and falls back off.
Putting it back up.

To have at least looked
at the
gay socialism,
of communal life, even
if predicated by wealthy
benefactors. Never being
sufficiently comrade
to buff
stats, to grease up
with tanning oil in a
pack.

Having a breast
in one hand
and a ham sandwich. And
the person with the breast
equally in it,
no less “ham sandwich” by
all appearances.

Partner in transference
of bodily fluids, of cupping
a breast and having a breast
cupped.

A partial list of police incidents
one Saint Patrick’s weekend in
Wrigleyville:

Zebra print party bus in alleged
hit and run with a Prius
at School and Clark streets.

Underage white male unresponsive
in the alleyway north of the DSW
in a pool of vomit.

20 guys fighting in the McDonald’s.  
And two calls for more officers.

An arrest  
at Al’s Italian Beef.

People throwing expensive beer  
from a window on Sheffield.

Someone bleeding  
from the eyes.

A man throwing money at passersby.

Club kids pouring bottles  
of Listerine, and then running  
out of the Circle K  
on Addison.

Someone has lost an eye  
by the Harry Carey bust and  
the perpetrator is still there,  
jumping around, like a meth user.

The bike store window has been cracked,  
by the Threadless storefront.

The abandoned yogurt shop is full  
of revelers, chanting a worrisome dirge  
and moving in a circle.

Some young men  
without shirts but  
covered in beer  
prancing around one  
another in  
a
Vascularity display

at Galway Bay.

Fistfuls of pubic hair.

Clumps

of band

aids,

beer. More

beer. Some

pamphlets.

A hair thing.

A rosary.

Underwear.
Bros lined up, some
helmet in hand, with
solemnity as if
the gravel truck were a burial site,
not approximate to a gravel pit.

Some sitting on a little cooler,
how they don’t choose what gets built,
just

lift the heavy bits, then
are forced to make determinations in
their own life, with no standard
of preparedness. No sock-sandal
holocaust, or perhaps

one. No standard
for judging that, even
but resistance moving
against a liquid.

One heavier wearing a
tee shirt under the fluorescent
vest. One a hoodie.
Waiting for the day to be
over.

And we too, holding the chest up
all day in our medial economies,
playing some part, contributing
more or less, playing both sides
against a common center
which is us. This having a choice
and often choosing wrongly. Jogging
with the dog and running out
of steam.
Somehow not in conversation
    with anything,
so self regulating.

Willfully missing things like
    pronoun clues, but responsive
to the returned vitriol
couched in
liminal play like streaking at
a baseball game or Anything
    But Clothes parties.

    Hiking up faded
red chino shorts to squat
with a football.

Licking the butter off toast
to get a little taste.

Deeming from a concrete
edifice. Between the magic
    hour and twilight. Cruxed
in a lubricated precipice with
    a fist
of hummus
because of the protein dense
calories and a natty ice for
the cost.

    And one slips.
Cleaves a quarter from the inside
    of the quadriceps on
a jaggedness and
leaves it
to descend fast,
cartwheeling directionless. Now
exposed flesh come out
of the pink shorts
    leg
having to be near the bone, the sides
of adjacent musculature showing.

All of this
next to the traditional
tan flesh covered in dark hairs, more
curved and
longer the further up
they are. Blood
draining onto both calves
and into the boat shoes.

A freshman
jollily skipping past.
Svelte grey backpack lifting
with each skip interval. Or

is he skipping with a destination and
great purpose. Is that even possible.

Being just,
glad to lose
soon, and move on.
Dead Robin

I saw a dead robin in the road, though

it wasn’t flattened just bundled into a curt package by dirt, with the wings closed up. There on its side, as ready to pop up

and alight—like a glad tramp might—

as lay in the road dead and have us consider it.

Perhaps there is another bird, traipsing around

an unkempt hedgerow, flitting around with an empty wrapper behind the edge of a curb,

what then? March as a preamble? Some quantum of new life mirth in the summer that is coming up?
Abstruse Goose

Remember that builder
with whom we fell in love between
light changes near the onramp
construction site? Like that.
Illusory as cat farts, likely

completely un-what one wants
in real life; Never having seen
30 Rock? What? Him housed
in a yellow tee shirt with
sleeves. He keeper of wind pleats.

His Giter Done 3000 astride
baseball bats, rifle stocks and
DVDs? and why not? Dirt
through hard work or accumulation
through lax care, for us both.

Wist by wan light bludgeoned
by drop of rain, implicit
with what rain brings: erosion
of the smallest particulates of dirt,
life, if it absolutely must.

Affixing the guardrails,
handrails, the steel trunk
and its uncompleted span
over the intersection from
which the new stop light hangs.

And it is on all night, lit up
yellow, rust, at luminisity’s limit,
and intermittent. Showing
each infrequent car that shows
up, metalwork and the grassy hill
to the power plant.
the Outbuilding

Richard Scarry had nothing on this: things with motors, wheels, a mouse awaiting the worm crawling an inclined plane up a central column to meet it. Police, students, and construction workers, them and the whole city moving. Making a vista in motion, chains raising and lowering trundle tumbling personages of Umberto Ecco and Hieronymus Bosch with an upturned hip jangling around a circle, some hundred yards distant and coming up. There’s a transcendentalness in the moire of it, if it can be parallaxed right. Its being always moving adds some difficulty, of course. Some arc light as a smattering of welders get to it. The narrow frame of a new outbuilding going up. The lithe walls like hard porcelain, all marshaled to upright work. Beneath a scree of gravel, perturbable by wind, even, leaves, dirt compacted by lots of feet and the big tread of equipment; once mud, now desiccated firm, grass veined whorls set and crevasses hardened. Some broken down or filled up by footwork with tan dirt dust. Maybe a bottle-cap or a twist tie. Multiple cranes at work, some jutting forward from the back. Pneumatics made gushy by hard wind. Refrigerated eighteen
wheelers who now are sidling up
the adjacent loading dock. Everything
moving, wind, the eroded asphalt
pile occluded to one sloop.
Stock straight, crinkled along the top.
A le Grande Jatte, broken along
one side but held together
with moving color, all ariot.
Taking some time to work it out in things.
Always moving. Reconsidering it. Taking
the good bits for granted and raising
heck. Reconsidering that, moving.
Grubby fingertips,
their own faction, fighting
for earnest hard work all
outward appearance and effect.
But doing up hard work.
All of it fixed. A new layer on top
with crinkle cut of corrugated aluminum
and a dump truck of dirt. Everyone
huddling around the green transformer box.
And yet another outbuilding
is coming up! Alike in nearly
all ways but some dozen yards
back. Quick sprung. Keeping three
or four concrete poured sections leaning
against the short end for new use. A flurry
of 3-story forklifts, articulated arms,
cherry pickers. One outbuilding
still bare red girders and the other, sprayed
with insulation and paint, is
starting to be closed up.
the Problem

If it were the end of this world
then the next would be ice.

Now, more violet around the edges of
the fingernails and nostrils
and transparent!

as if there is a capillary
action to the end.

Spastic as the colon
in the old joke is,
sputtering all around,
the result of some fast
or other in the presence
of deliciousness.

As if blood would
not be delicious
if you were thirsty
enough.
Of course
it would.

The idea was
"stay young forever,"
and cashpoor,
and globules
shot through
taint hair,
cuticle clippings
and vaseline
as a functional decision:
the age of majority
was aged, the pert
tummy was stale spittle

in the face of both hands
flat in the carpet—
and however the body was—
in a protestation
coming apart
in spiderwork,

which was less consolation.
That is the way
the world works
(in a blast of fission
then little
perturbances).

Heart, you lack half-clench.
If you are rising
higher in the ice bed
the floe is growing warmer.
If you are sinking water
then it no longer is.

Whether that compression
over the years, now the layers
on layers of skin,
and "Our selection of any
standards, was not zealotry"
but politicking.

And if depravity in hope
is in place of scholarship
and learning: I'm scholastic.
If drinking your fathers
potato spirits solvent
not even fit
for old fashioned
prairie drink off, but
you know.

I'm the mower machinery
gunked with susceptible grease.

And going blinder!
the bootstrapping
which began
in the Finger Lakes
and ended up in smoggy southern Appalachia
lifted the poor rube from the somnolence of poverty
unto its quietude

—of mud! tar bitumen, sealing wax, the stuff that keeps
the coifed bangs up, sugar, yeast, blood, stuff like that.
to the point that Ezra Koenig is indistinguishable from Charlemagne.
Tesla is from Chachi, Dev Patel: Aziz Ansari.

Each of them doing what they can, hand in the other's pocket.
Man, membranous and luscious

verite, if anything is, you are.

If it were just us three at the end of everything, someone would be there unpresently.
If the ship's prow were building toward a head in water there would be more water.
If the sunrise said
"fuck you," to the sunset
and stayed overhead
all day, It would be hot
for a long time,
shadows would hide away.

Hope is the way
of heaving.
Our breathing.
Sweat forming
on our brows.
Everybody!

join in with…
...
and giving up.
There is a universal
buzzword,
and it's a bacchanal

and has all
the promise of sex,
and of being huddled in the grasses,
away from Horologium
that lunatic
watchman.

Caveat rursus
scriptor: it is not worth it.
Leave the correspondence home
and don't be home.
Do not be tied to the telephone
however caressing

it is on the short hairs
on the back of your neck
and the bottom of your head.
There will be more hair later
but this hair
is here now.
Do not get the impression that leaving the house is different from not leaving the house, stop thinking about it that way.

Back under the awning, scorned as a scorned thing is. You are this: confusion of excellences, loss preventioneer in a land of lost things.

which does by increments illicit a love so bastardized that mine could undo it. Cousin of stupidity is hope.

Align yourself with the seraphim that their small and luminous fingers should pick up the beat from your breath and do something useful with it. And that the suspicious angel is always working himself up to a huffy lather farcical tear wrought cheeks
chrubic
will outlast.
Poor guy has got
a good feeling
about it. The rest will
envelop
him with platitudes.

So
buy them each off
with a carafe of iced coffee,
a package
of sour straws;
or whatever
and run in the opposite direction.

Alas,
the
good
part of life
that was
the fundament
of jokes has
taken precedence.

Lovely,
if love is
a pest tent
in the humid southwest
and you are fresh out of tinctures
of dopeful relief.

But if you remind me
that hope
is a thing deferred
over the
mountains
of a fantasy novel
then you would do that.
If you were anticipation
concentrate
then your enaction
would dilute you all out
to a few scant parts
per billion.

And you would drink like water
and eventually
be gone. Unless!
the spectral realm
were a clarion
    into the palm fat
for us

and thinking that that
that's emblematic.
And thinking that
things have
    that
changed's
misunderstanding them.

If trying to learn something of love
    from old British television;
then I'm the telecom;
the subject of bribery,
    so much money is at stake
that a grandmum'd
walk over ground glass
so much money into
the pockets of an MP
for a seat on some Beeb
    sub-board.

All of this not
to say that Dench is not
trying to say to one
"Love the old man with all of your heart,"
(despite the harumph.)
But the Dame died.

It is a hard life,
stumbling around
the effect of some
proud parent
or other,
in the face
if disaffection.

There are all of these adapters
outside of the closed-off world
of propriety
that power the device,
effect a video-out
from the mini-mini jack
(if that's at all possible)
and whence

what came in
is going out…

…
I just want to tell you the truth:
I do not love you
    Yet.
But give me twenty-five seconds.

Remember the condition
of this arrangement?
A curdy spume
    of ghosts among them would.
of spray
searching the third third
in a realm of right angles.

And if that life'd just
stay the same way forever
it would be a way to judge standards
    at least.
And if pride faltered
adjudication would be there
to pick up the pieces.

And if those pieces were indifferent
and fell where they may've
you could mark
the lack of surprise
in billions
of Annie Lennox songs.

All of this in service
    of desperation
    nothing not
    in service of it
head and arms above it
    legs above it,
this is not aesthetic
it is lonesomeness,
melancholia
has been assigned too soon.
    despite the maudlin nature.
    I am not drunk.
    It was just a glass of something
    while making the sauce.

If Ulliel,
or something in that vicinity,
were the originator
of the infamously
neutral dark phial
it would mean an

unorderly and riotous
exodus from heaven
    there is so much blood
    involved.
    How is that
    at changing opinions?
He might wear the black jeans
    still. Of course he will.
    Shut the fuck up,
    he is a wreck
    of tar and bones.
I do not know this.
The IAEA
has given up all hope
and the council is despairing of it.
His profile is not that high
    in those circles.
They are concerned about him quietly.
I could penetrate him quickly
    at a run
and forgo subtlety
but what would that prove?

That I am as cutthroat
in sex as vivisection?
That the nickel-plating
on the brass coming off
was only a matter of time?
No

we never had sex
    (I said it was because
        of his bastard origin
        and he thought we had had!)
there was the hope of it.
O, there were great hand jobs,
and an orgasm that greeted
the headboard with a splat!
it began with a back rub
    that meant
        whatever it meant.

The cavalier spirit was
a gay disaster, still is.
If there were a stalagmite of it
I would stop impaling myself
    (no I wouldn't:
        the spelunking expedition
        pared the gearing up to the bone,
        had no implements or vittles:
        and though the bat carrion
        on the way in
        was plentiful,
        potable water
        was a problem.
What was all anticipation
for big crystals,
and wet dreams for
the anthropologist
tennis player that we
found down there—
he had made
a rattan net
out of the luminous flora
at the end
of a basalt cliff
and he played with himself—
led to knowledge
of the health insurance policy
and it's
ha
benefits.

And that was that!

(Though his hair
was long and rippling
even when glistening
with sweat
the beard,
the forearms,
the eye twinkle,
the staid dedication
even after no fossil record was found
no fossil record was found.)

No I wouldn't. It is not
too big an imposition.

And still have the freedom
to make banal decisions,
the ponytail, the flat-front trousers;
without finding a hole
bored through, or
the bruised up legs.

If equity in love were a death game
like when the beach fell
in a torrent of astral blood
and sunlight were
antiseptic
in that way,
it may be night, still,
all day long.

There would be
bellies cut off in
horizontal downward strokes
suggesting self-knife use
but no knives
or evidence of reason.

fought to the point
that even
the content
is contentious
for example:
"This one is
the hairy
small of a back.
There is
not much to it.

"This one is
a handful
of pubic hair clippings
scattered over an upturned
tray of flan!

"This one's
gravel and tears!

"This is
eviscera
and a splash
of milk!"

For sure
we are done being friends.
Feels so nice
to have finally
gotten out.
If the guns

put to the lank temples
was "Destiny for eternal larks?  
no."
Maybe, but a rainy day
affection you can't shake
until your bones
are worn down to steel pins

and calcium bicarbonate.
You indeed have a podium,
from the northwest
and on it's middle shelf
(hidden from me)
may well be
lactaid, the valium
for which I've been pining,
a pound of gooseflesh
and just shy of a liter of my blood,

three pop-tarts, your student card,
I am so hungover,
and should never have supposed
that a red line on the sidewalk
was the result of petrified
angel heart

being held against it
on a walk;
and nothing else,
it was not
the raglan's fault
it was your fault.

And that Christendom
has a capillary action;
intimating; Christ is gone
and he is missed,
and he is penetrated and
the problem is that hope exists.
Christ talked
to everyone
about what to wear
to my wake
and decided
on the linen shorts.
I arrived late,
was having a hard time
acclimating to death.
The shorts were transparent.
Christ kept crossing
and uncrossing his legs
with fey action.
It was hot,
his shirt was open
to the third button.
Two Fingers

Is Nottingham so shit
as this? I know
temporariness of slights.
And being young, heck
my sixteen year corner hangs
were heated basements in an
avalanche of afghans. And
teetotal.
No teal y fronts as a weapon,
grunted chair rails and
a mess of spit out wine.

But
glossiness of terminal floors
of imagined crowds of
Christmas lights,
nipple hair
collecting fluff. It not
stopping,
keens
a wide arc, seemingly
frictionless.
Nothing Was Beautiful and Everything Hurt

Veil of evil
when have I got so old

that my dumb teeth
are coming apart?

At seams which're
indecipherable to the young?

The once roguishly quaint quiff
flops, languid carrion heaps on

a scruff bald pate all
ventriculated with black. Thing

suffused with chicken-skinned
crevices, puckering glans hoods,

knuckles contained with ripples
from palm to tip as if I’ve lived a bath life.

Adam: thing of
enumerated lists

more than half
footnote now,

driving the outside
of a spiral

unto…
you know:

the rough half
of Perlite finish

when supplicating
with tear-wet cheeks
ravaged across
the walls—

it's that
half.

Perhaps getting fat will make
some respite in the skin (but

hasn't yet, just voluptuizes
the flaps)

at the cost of the heart;
and nuzzles aside dermis, sets

back the slackening suture-
drive that skin once had.

My prime life now past
to the shellshock of baser

attractions which do not wane
but content themselves in

masturbation, like
harlot clavicles, thighs, (which

never my strong suits were) abs
(not nearly), the lengths of fingers,

"golden hair," balance of hating the body
and having it, wroughtness of bone

and too soon flesh, willingnesses,
allowances, things like this.

What had been petulance commingling
with fear now's fear and diffidence.

Shotgun alliance of getting more patient
with the corpus. Watching for
watchwords like 'caffeine intolerance'
to the multiple carafe-day life. And

the rollback: lite, black tea, decaf.
Burgeoning with lust after the condensation

on thin plastic cups of iced coffee as if
pornography after no sex or pornography
for some years.

Alright,
yes.

Drinking oneself to death,
unto accumulation of

life detritus, perhaps
the twist tie from a thing of hot dog buns

and its replicated thousands,
a baker's dozen Chipotle bags

scrunched up paper towels,
topless supplement bottles.

Scores of
cat corpses.

And winnowing back
to threadbare meat covered in flesh.

Thing for accumulating scars and holding
breath, howsoever corrosive air

predilections were. Life,
in a world where breathing means death.

Newfoundland of appropriateness, my
terrible friend, in twenty some years
of blood excruciated from stone. That some nail's overlong, some new mole

is producing ovular black hair out of all proportion with regional hair growth. Making

self-censorship a virtue like "Am I unhappy? Yes. But can appreciate pragmatism,"

in cattiness, the smell of sweat compounded on sweat until a crystal is eclipsed

of wet tears, tetrahydrocannabinol concentrate and Centrum Complete.

Vitamin D. Niacin, straight up aspirin.

Tums. Sleeping pills.
Paper Butt

Even if crumpled up paper butt can’t
   I’m not. You half.
Twice cut can, my heart lump that
   heavies the mitral bit
right down to bible which bit back.
Crusty cut teeth meet each crenelated
edge to complicate the meeting so
   the gears disagree to
non-viable machine. Nipple which
   wants root rot.
Blood bit sanguine sup grit laugh not
   enough haver slash a bramble bush.
   Christ cruf t eagle tip.
Lip flat dangling from thread heft
   and blunt force rip. Grubbly gut
   you nicest night, you
not enough, and ever up.
Very Bloody

Even the whole world inundated with orange blood
Could not drown us out; sopping accoutrements
apres breath life; so long to apparatusless jaunts.

This necrotic blood lotus is recurrent to the crunchy gauds
of crenellated roccoconess, resident to a lapping embankment
which all sight is, all hemmed in with disease arder,

stumped up with scubic tenor and deep fright.
A crust of sweat life languid, on a liquid, rasping
in tight so the motive is consumptive, very bloody.

Bravery is going out with no affordances. And the
only conveyance is an impact crater of entropy near-misses
fuzzing the whole thing in a scrim, like a lolloping bloody cataract

that only goes in a listing circle but with the
port bow down, so that every revolution screws it
into the wave deeper. And blood runs over the fun

deck, makes everything there covered in gore, very bloody.
Okay, down in that colloid light stopt quick, as some lowlands
seemed held up in knobs of brownish platelet

if it could easily be lit up. (Which of course it could not.
Blood too dense. The featureless towns sunk too boring to inquire
after.) We set up competitions to divide ad share revenue and decide

where to put the barge city next.

I too died to luxuriate in encountering you deep
in that muck, skirting the anxiety by forcing it on you.
We’d get deep in as pig shit, our bodies’d fall apart, and

that’d that. Not too hard. I am a lazy fuck stick.
Want it too bad, happy to contextualize life drift with
Sophistry, and tangle in deep to vowels excision,
Not even some cruft left, just bringing it up. Still bringing it up. Lashing out when it comes to it, or to corerce. Brick house smoke chiding down deep choke as grizzly bits, with christ graft. Dealing w/ that. Making up threats. That. Two parts cleaved down their cloven hearts. At a gallop. Receding to luft lips, to coils of rope, death. Yer enough. Yer enough.
Corpse Jet

Not even a bulbous corpse jet, darling. Just existential threat.
As in no thing for lifetime space movie dram. Hallowed rhime life.
Full up of rosacea jump dump taft huff, bricolage criminality and sup life raft. I nightmare made to espadrille real, giving up child to graft. Supine in goop. Relinquished star essences to fading effervescences of universe to big small moving to gawp tight in. Who fluff it, you? Bitch tip up, noise off. Farce flat commingling to tit tat, absolute breath jump. Gun hands disgust it, that humm. Teetotal to a big morphine replete cabal palate where blood life. Yup, blood hive straight tat ink guff, titular half, beckoning branch crotch to make it all up.
Die Young

If there is virtue in it.
Capricious ballads like in
a chamber, and what comes out?
Something especially coherent? Narrative
catching a boot tip on the happiness trap
that clamps it shut? It is that insatiable
pizza butt teeth’s contented comp.

Dogs know it. Yipping to get up
in yer guts and bed down in yer heart.
Who can blame them? The shape of man’s
tender bits to their supine mind chassis.
Look. It is real complicated and not
at all confined to pizza dogs, such that.

How often it boils all down to ancient dun
Fire glow’s plain companionship.
To hash a global eugenicist mess.
As if plain mastery weren’t justifiable.
And nope. No here-there road near
as we can tell. No one leaves.

Of course out means no take-backs
But amplified lightsong remittance,
for which no real deposit exists, see?
The blowback efflux we incite
makes lower transference of pizzalife
coming out, dispersing to space,
seeding yer delightful meaningness juice
to farflung hosts of fireglowstuff.

Too canis lupus extremuses all set
to lavish spare edification (to the tune
of reproduction loss and heart hurt) as
a Betelgeuse duplication of rebar-making,
saline injection practice that plastic bag
outgassing makes on stuff. Die young.
[Cusp’d, fingertips.]

Cusp’d, fingertips.
Dug in greedy earth
palms back.

Which rise by light
sonorous spouts n
deafen back.

    Withering touch.
    As if all wrn’t
    luminous night
of Hindenburg rising
to prewar flight
of possibility of contact.

To come back. Bodies
peculiarites. Home
steads of rclaimd warehouse

ought up. All
on that side
‘v town.
Anal Dilators

My house is a fucking mess.
And it is outward. My friend Josh
went to visit his dad who is a dentist,
who has this shadowbox display in his den,
of old medical equipment, from,
I don’t know, now that I think of it,
the forties, maybe. Twenties, by
the lettering, labeled “Anal Dilators.”

They are plastic, cock-shaped butt plugs
or footlong sticks with a shoehorn
flange. Their diameters range from a wooden
spoon handle, to a silver dollar.

This is from Josh’s childhood. My
house has styrofoam takeout boxes
which’re now furniture; holding and dividing
important papers into categories, untold

bottles, pubic hair, mold coming to
reclaim what was once swampland
growing stinky onions; growing
stinky onions once more. I am

in love with Josh, a little bit. And
have been since my roommate
brought him home one night, on
a date, in the autumn of 2006, but

I wonder what he would think of
my dildos falling all over themselves
to be put to good use but are stopped by
my self compounding residue and laundry.
Antelope Butte

See, no magic on Antelope Butte, I
expire to root cellar & gear up bare for first
frostshit onslaught. To expend I am a forced
retraction with neck densed down into clavicle hollows,
impenetrable to the chorus of gay lilt voice parts
and lyrical cloudsmatter.

To Bison Island I retire and shunt half cock
loveliness and sod clod unto a child summer wind whip.
It is magic, I suppose. The affordance
to reject and to exalt in the rejection. Those
big ruminants, barely capable as me, awing.
the Metacreature Bloom

A berth bubbling
of biologicals
doubling each cycle
and barreling edge over,
into the foreground, even

the blob contents

bounding

traffic cones,
vaunting highway barrels
really speeding up
then / nothing but

mostly a lot of people
and animals dying.
And / all plants got canker and
went quick

to elations of fungi that came up.

It all denser,
less.

the Deluge

The mental steps underlying good human chess playing and theorem proving are complex and hidden, putting a mechanical interpretation out of reach. Those who can follow the play naturally describe it instead in mentalistic language, using terms like strategy, understanding and creativity. When a machine manages to be simultaneously meaningful and surprising in the same rich way, it too compels a mentalistic interpretation.
Of course, somewhere behind the scenes, there are programmers who, in principle, have a mechanical interpretation. But even for them, that interpretation loses its grip as the working program fills its memory with details too voluminous for them to grasp.

As the rising flood reaches more populated heights, machines will begin to do well in areas a greater number can appreciate. The visceral sense of a thinking presence will become increasingly widespread. When the highest peaks are covered, there will be machines than can interact as intelligently as any human on any subject. The presence of minds in machines will then become self-evident.¹

//

We thought / no whole wide thing
about it. But were thoroughly borked.

To an animal arboretum, //

    going backward , feeling

    trivial
    lost legs. Maybe
    getting along, stumbling. / Still.

    // adjacent was
    the farm, the conservatory.

¹ All of this comes from Hans Moravec’s “When will computer hardware match the human brain?” which was published in the Journal of Evolution and Technology in 1998 and is readily available online. I have struck though bits for my purposes, and thereby “written” Moravec’s text anew. For my own purposes. As a “metacreature” might.
Both of em fiery, inundated to the waistup
   /     with water,

   spewing
butterflies  /     or goats out,

   and set them up inroads

and a purpose.  /     of reclamation

   and some meaningful ways

   /     possible

who knows.

///Best of luck to em.

Geological Causations

The would be no weather without earth's axial tilt. It means only its orthogonal extents are very similar all year round, and accounts for the churning of air basically everywhere else. The ocean has a similar meteorology, and it is not entirely unrelated to the air one. Ice melts at the poles, and cool waters flow along the sea floor in a moderately coherent jetstream. Until at the equator the water warms back up and flows back to the poles, on the top. It is called the conveyer belt. Meanwhile the atmosphere is heavily influenced by water evaporating off because of its temperature, and the vagaries of the conveyor belt's day to day life; strengthening storms and increasing the length and severity of El Niños and similar of global weather events. It is the churning that not only keeps things moving, but makes them varied, moderates their extremities.

But the arctic part of the conveyer belt is not only cool but is also fresh and thereby less buoyant than the increasingly salinated condensate it
flows equatorward to replace. There is an amount of this cold fresh water
that stops the conveyor belt. The oceans become saltier, butting back up against the poles. Under the glaciers and floating ice
packs, where its lower freezing point lubricates the ice moving out.
Catalyzing its melting. Sending a complicating onslaught of fresh water
out. Fucking everything up lots. It can happen real fast once it starts.²

All of it coalesces

in a
sodden dank
into a sort of metacreature.

With joshua tree nature
of all rhizomatic root
across the damn planet
joined to branch, under the oceans

(at the shallowest part of them
no doubt)

but made of the joshua tree stuff
they are dead gone

///And the metacreature
is

alliding

global surfaces, like a
mold internet carried on

flossy tendrils
which bedew hillocks

² This text I have written myself, wholesale. But seeing as how it’s formatted similarly to the Moravec bit
above, I disclaim. (Feel free to “rewrite” it, perhaps you can make more of it than I can. This is entirely
likely.) The concepts are based on sound science. And though I’d encountered them before, my
appreciation for them was greatly deepened by Kim Stanley Robinson’s “40 Signs of Rain,” wherefrom I
also lifted the idea of zoo animals becoming “wild” again.
and Reisctags alike,

are bright saffron

have flat tan caps

seep black goop / that explode on impact

in a carboniferous puff.

Averting a

Marginally Larger Dryas

with hot breath.

The remains of hospitals,
aircraft carriers,
the beak of a giant

/squid

jutting up; if I am seeing right

all laid out the the metacreature,

a vertitable maidens feast
laid out to the consumptor,

to be incorporated
/everything eventually incorporated

to a fungible set

of organic monomers,

inhospitable to combination

but sympathetic,
each part doing
some reorganization

on what it touches.

Hot / pricks
gooseflesh out, razes it,

Brings it back / melts it,

to us few
who could still move / through it

with enough oomph
to keep our amino acids

from fizzing up,
relinquishing our parts

to it.

Nothing really has been, can be.
We thought

backwards,
blendt to it, / for days on end.

Travailed.

Making up the whole decreasingly
pie part,

of an afternoon and / three bodies

communally on the move

in a vessel.
Bog Life

A half century ago it began to drown the lowlands, driving out human calculators and record clerks, but leaving most of us dry. Now the flood has reached the foothills, and our outposts there are contemplating retreat. We feel safe on our peaks, but, at the present rate, those too will be submerged within another half century. I propose that we build Arks as that day nears, and adopt a seafaring life! For now, though, we must rely on our representatives in the lowlands to tell us what water is really like.

Our representatives on the foothills of chess and theorem-proving report signs of intelligence. Why didn't we get similar reports decades before, from the lowlands—computers surpassed humans in arithmetic and rote memorization? Actually, we did, at the time. Computers that calculated like thousands of mathematicians were hailed as "giant brains," and inspired the first generation of AI research. After all, the machines were doing something beyond any animal, that needed human intelligence, concentration and years of training. But it is hard to recapture that magic now. One reason is that computers' demonstrated stupidity in other areas biases our judgment. Another relates to our own ineptitude. We do arithmetic or keep records so painstakingly and externally, that the small mechanical steps in a long calculation are obvious, while the big picture often escapes us. Like Deep Blue's builders—we see the process too much from the inside to appreciate the subtlety that it may have on the outside. But there is a non-obviousness in snowstorms or tornadoes that emerge from the repetitive arithmetic of weather simulations, or in rippling tyrannosaur skin from movie animation calculations. We rarely call it intelligence—but "artificial reality" may be an even more profound concept than artificial intelligence.3

Then, over centuries:

The surfaces

of all earth turn
in on themselves
recede
from the metacreature

3 Back to Moravec (strikethroughs still mine)
which colonizes / more and more of it. Almost instantly in “that” time frame.

And / it becomes a narrative about a systems and people cease showrunning.

What underneath was circumspect, and as near to xenobiotic as it could get, really. Made manifest our / inattention, only to take it all back.

To leave crufts

/awind, left. / Bog them in deep, more and more overtime until the earthchest upheaving is the only meaningful movement that the whole place makes. / Opens the kalxon alert valve, because the actual main one is all globbed shut. Or the sum of their joined output is quiet.

And too high pitched.
Perennial Stagnation

Gliese 581c is planet that is tidally locked, like our moon. One side always faces the body it’s orbiting. This is what things are like there: one side gets all of the light from the star Gliese 581, and further, that same point gets hit head on by the most direct rays, always. At this point it makes sense to start calling it the solar pole which recedes outward to an equatorial dusk and the night side that covers the back hemisphere.

All the air explodes up from the solar pole then sinks back to the nightside, cools at the coldest spot opposite. Only to be sucked back by the absence that it had just left. Like the conveyer belt. But being devoid of meaningful rotation (insofar as insolation is concerned) there is no weather there. Just hot or cold air rushing past you wherever you are or constant rainy ocean around the equator. If there is any water.  

Until the metacreature

has won out. Even things you would think would take longer to be used up

by putrefaction,
or else sufficiently degraded
to be molecular, shuffled off

in an outgassing,

/only to be replaced

by dust cycling back in from outer space.

Sophomore convection

with the / outside

Life.

And drag it bog

down

Here.

4 Me again. Hi.
Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

//

A trillion automaton battalions at beck and call, / could not turn this back with both hands. //If they were instantiated and not as some halfwit relation of theory to deli meats and “so much empty space” that “it hurts.” but just put down, / in irradiated japanese metal and self-healing tan nylon coverings to keep rust out and lubey grease in.

Yup their synthetic digits don’t move planets, build /ice up /ravenous humans who notwithstand chap ass.

---

5 This one’s Groucho Marx. ;) (strikethroughs mine)
What else?

Meteorological fiat,
cloud seeding
(turned out / accelerative.

Doubt that
fire spreading would / put it out.

More and more felled to it,
like a borg hive / of
a utilitarianist universe. Resident

in its neighborhood as having relented
to its native ways / and
needed “very

badly” to

come back.

//

It

Collecting all tax

on the material of life;
carboxygens, at least, some protien- / lipids
that were easily transferred and made up
each bit of all of the metacreature’s parts,

/and elided them betwixt

them self.
Mold Sea

The bosun is nearly transparent now. Fuzzy around the edges and thickening to a gooey center, like a tapioca bubble. His short frame flounces back and forth bundling giant cables that he is pulling still slick from the mold sea.

Off the starboard bow there is a perturbation of the surface, and a spume of mist or spray of steam is emitted. It is so humid. The gamboling swatches of hair still remaining on my head slank over my forehead obscuring the already dark vista. I would hack them off but for there's so little left. I whip my head back, slopping them out of my vision. The bosun gestures at his work and says —Tie the cables down, and grabs the nearby harpoon by its closest bit. Which is the waxed metal head, meant to keep it from oxidation. And it is hot enough that the wax is melty and sweating, like us, so it must meld with the bosun’s sloppy hand when he grabs it.

He does not sound good. His edges have been mostly opaque, but even his center is transluced through with even wan light now. The parts of him that make sound, likely, phasing between solid and gel.

Should we get the— “captain,” I would finish, but the bosun glares at me, before slipping behind the rigging, and shouts —To the cables!

Land amalgm, whether
by rights of connectedness
to bedrock,
or dense flotsam
and harder bits of molding
congealed
by happenstance,
no account for
atmospheric conditions,
and blown about together
(some ugly respite of
sporesea. Cruft
wind, when it is, a thick
with wet spores
and motes of dust, a
cartilaginous husk of a whale)

unmoored

from any bottomness,
moving tectonically
    in our

massive knot of
stagnant water,

    covering the whole
planet, no less. As a quality of
deservednes.

From the unknown, and so
assumed porous shore,
to coming up on it,

indeterminate to hazy
surface. Bristle
typified it.
    but

coming up on it.
Flora covered it.

There is tell of large creatures that live near the surface, but I don’t see how that’s possible. Some bivalves makes sense. Jellyfish had always comprised species that were nearly not eukaryotic, big viruses or fungus, almost all water. But the mold sea is not...hospitable...to more complex life forms. Even the boats jet engines whose parts are made of an alloy coated in obdurate imporus porcelain, have to be swung up on their housing arms and cleaned daily, as we putter along on the small plastic propellor motors. To keep from being digested.

As I move to the cabling now slithering backward, siphoned by some tug beneath the surface, into the water a wave roils the it, pushing it back in a deep ripple from the direction of the disturbance. I stumble into a slick black bulkhead, which seems to heatsink, because it is
scalding. The bosun readies the harpoon into the gloom from which a bulge of water emerges, moving toward the ship. I think, the captain should like to see this. But he has been shut up in his quarters in the stern beneathdecks for some weeks.

The ship still moves forward some dozy knots, neither of us having adjusted the motors (the wind had been stagnant for months, and the bosun joking referred to it as sargasstic, but has since stopped talking much). The captain may be sleeping just now. But the bosun occasionally brings him a firkin, or will ascend the ladder steps from his quarters with new directives on occasion, but is mostly silent.

The bulge dissipates, and only a small wave reaches the hull to ring a hollow thump. It’s relatively loud. The captain will have heard it.

And the cable’s knit covering buzzes as it begins furiously to unspool over the port railing. Wet gobbets from the mold sea spray up from where it's going in. And some wetslump up on the deck in a crescent. It is mostly still quiet.

Take up
yer gear
—the bosun shouted.
Fronds swept water,
the tendrils of grey

foam dreadlocked from
weepy mangroves, like
they were glowing, but

for the pale color. And
rivermouth, and outward
flow of crystalline pure
water. The psuedomotion

of current drawn channels
in moldea. He bounded the
rails of the boat, on

to the shore, sank to
low waist on contact

into the muck there,
and squelched
under a flap of tan hypha,

into a copse of transparent
There are two times of day on the mold sea. Night and dusk. Night is long. Something like eighteen hours, though it never gets very dark. What does happen is that the colors of the mold sea blends into the sky color. The boat, mostly, then thrums on with the jet motors, but we would certainly hit anything that we came across. Nothing more than a few meters out is distinguishable from the indeterminate, infinite dim ground. Occasionally I have to unsnare a bigger clot of mold if we hit upon one. I use a big polearm made of crimped rebar. But during it’s long coming on, our eyes become accustomed to the darkness. We can see things on deck alright, if they don’t move quick.

Night is punctuated on either side by dusk. It is where the sky brightens up until the haze in it is a few shades lighter than the mold sea. The sky is often lighter around the horizon, where the mold sea meets it, forming a line crenelated with bigger outcropping mold clumps and their wet dangly branches on occasion. They fill the mold sea, make it dark, more or less, with flashes of starkly brown-orange, or a scratch of white fuzz, little grey mushrooms growing on a loftier, dry patch, if one is. Dusk ends quick.

The bosun drops the harpoon and pulls some gloves from a bulkhead alcove on his way back to the cables. And grabs the bottom bundles, leaving ample slack to the force unspooling the cable. I fumble with my coveralls, but have no gloves, never have. I begin to mumble —We should probably get the captain. But by then the bosun has tied down his end to a cleat, and turns still holding the cable as the slack runs out. Friction-inertia whips the gloves from his hands and some of their surface with them. He groans damply, and the new hands lack all of their definition, are much smaller.

The cables twang tight and the portward force jerks the bow down. And we dip so deeply that after a little froth, some of the mold sea rushes in the scuppers, and some flows over the edge of the railing.

The captain
strikes an imposing figure.
His tattered pea coat and
felt tricorn hat,

it’s edges damp, rolled in
to a wide cylindrical brim,
the curve knurled with

a rhimercrust of whitefuzz.

A deep breath of moldsea
air, some breezehackles
raised or perhaps not. No
avoiding it. Rot, alternate
life. Tearing off on it. Out
of the boat. With a dreamrhino
of dense fungalfoam stippled
with dirtgrime and suffused of
helpful molds. Everything is
not not it. Both ends of the
livingspectrum. Limp against
it.

Covered in dewsweat. The clang of
the captain’s quarters hatch opening
was the only sound, but for the dank
hum of life or silence reiterating back.
And he came out.

The bosun backs up until we’re both against the bridge bulkhead. But nothing happens. The ship
bobs upright, level, and mold sea water comes back at us. Reaches above our knees, at the
highpoint. Some mold clumps flow into our boots. Begin, surely, to merge with what was once
the bosun’s feet.

Eventually the bosun directs me (his hands now useless) to reel the cable back in, and it
comes unimpeded. The end is frayed; nylon yarn spraying akimbo on one edge or all cut
congruently on the other. There had been no trap, nor anchor, nor sensor of any sort on the end of
it. It was spare cable for the rigging. Why it was trolling behind us I don’t know. I go
beneathdecks to change my boots, and when I’m down there I hear clanging coming from the
stern sections and assume he’s filling the captain in on what's happened. I take off my boot, my
toes are black.
At first I suspect that mold clumps have just stuck in between them, or on a hangnailed cuticle,
or rough hewn toenail. But after I wipe away the mold sea plasma, they’re still black. And matte,
like cheap wet velveteen. I throw up.
Now there is an island on the horizon. A dark blip against the less opaque haze of a dusk. I spot it watchkeeping from what counts as the ships crownsnest, the highest crux of rigging that can support my weight.

The bosun, I notice, watching me, emits a sound like gas escaping from a peat bog. His body pops then reverberates after the sound comes out of it. But otherwise he seems in good spirits. I gesture at the horizon island, now visible from the deck and say —Land. The bosun extracts his junk spyglass from wherever he keeps it. Shoves it into his undifferentiated translucent face which is wet, whitish, yellow-grey, blue-green, between aspic and aerogel in viscosity.

I extricate myself from the rigging, hunch down against the trap racks, take off the boot, wanting and not wanting to see the foot.

Flurry of motion,
how water and primal
goop conform to no man.
But they move! tangled
in a scrapp of tatty felt,
hanged simianly
by an apparatus they
made up.

Going with somerage
at the cause of the commotion,
which is everything,
no leastself. How
what to do when
what got it.
Just fucking get to it.

Scrambling up ladderforms,
recreationally assigning guiltshapes
in the animalbrainpart
it is bifurcated,
trifurcated,
thinking now for themself,
what’d been deep id.

Unmoored.
Unrepentant.
Cautious
in the way noconsciousness
The fungal forests darkly burgeon from the coast, fronds and tendrils hanging out over the water’s surface. Some small copses of fungal mangroves, there is movement in it. The bosun pilots from the bridge cabin, though I honestly don’t know how, now. Occasionally I hear sounds emanate from there, but cannot make them out, if they are intended for me, they are very quiet. A new dusk is dawning after a long night.

It is so humid that my coveralls are falling apart. The front zipper has long since calcified over, at waist height so I tied the arms around my middle. The fabric is coming apart at the seams, but not the stitching, which is still fairly bright red acrylic. My ears and bellybutton have been itching. And we get closer to shore.

I am wearing the bosun’s spare gloves (too small), or are they the Captain’s? I try to remember the captain's hands, but it is difficult. They were more or less my size; he was nearly the same size as me, now I’m sure. Then the bosun’s. I am holding the harpoon.

It is difficult to tell what the motion is. It is still early dusk. The haze brightens uniformly. Against it the island is still dark.

When we get very close shapes come out. What is probably a large flat cap. It is. It gets clearer, things are determinate.

A sound comes from the bridge cabin. Almost no more flora could fit on the island. This is megaflora. At least. No more lifeforms could fit on the island. Big spiralling cones, pale yellow. Things that look like brain coral, a clutch of saffron stamens seven meters long, sticking out of a lower canopy. Lots of grey-brown, green-brown with algal lichens. Transparent prairie grassess bowed under someother fungus’s thick stem dripping dark ichor. There is movement. Abrupt, random and repeated enough to fear fauna.

A waterfall! spring
driven from some upriver source. Lapis crystal in psuedomotion, fulldrunk to comical distension.
Sated.

Small creatures emerged, seemingly mammalian, but covered with variant mottled salamandrine skin. Red and black sploitchings, or nimbler greyed out fleshtone hands, fourfingered and weirdly
humanlike. Some fair faint
moth descended, awing, to an
eddying current, picked through
modlclumps that are grown
junglein to a secluded basin,
with its insectile proboscises.

Taking our fill. And there
being one. Bobbing in
fat washflush, getting poked
in the butt by a gentle rock.
Nestling that wet jostle in.

There is a rivermouth. I spot it. We had had been no clean water for a night and a half, though I seem to be the only one suffering from it. The bosun is nearly one with the air, now. Blending to cottonfloss as a gas, at his furthest extents.

He goes beneathdecks to confer with the captain. I guess. I don’t know if he ever existed, and if my memories are but part of some sick bosun tactic. What games can return him now, I’m unsure of. No way to know if I am a pawnstuff, for multiplicity sporehosts, that undeniably are. I have a hacking cough, which is productive. My eyes constantly itch, but if I touch them they secrete a warm film of mucous that smells of vinegar. I have not urinated in some nights.

We near up on it, and undirected I notice there being no moldclump in it. And that it is exceedingly good. And send a vessel down into it, as nearest I can get, on a thong of leather. And when it’s back it smells of nothing (a noticeable absence) and it is fine and clear, though somewhat tainted by the mold sea backwash.

And I shout —Fresh water!
And the bosun is returned and says —We go upriver next dusk.
And I say —By order of the captain? Shall we begin to refill the ballast, at least? Oh, here now comes the tailings of dusk!

I drowse one nightpart.

And the captain is upon me.

His reeking peacoat now calcified with tendriling bony outgrowths, like successive racks of scarlet antlers (but too too thin) with gnarled perforations, stonelike, flecked with glinty gold. He’s wielding the harpoon highly but angled with the business bits down, raising and lowering it, a tremulous growl echoing distantly from the hollows of his chest. He scrables forward dashing the point at where I had been, resounding a clang of deckplate, rung. Some sympathetic sounds rise from the jungle, variably distant. The fauna on the shoreline shudders with bulbous rustles of airfilled sacs bubbling.

I spiral out, arms and legs spread straight, and make a whooshing sound. But into the warm slick steel at the railcrux on the starboard side. The captain’s antlers turn to trace me as the captain scrabbles the harpoon back up, turns.
I am off sprinting. The motion of pumping limbs tears out the side of my tanktop, so it dangles two flaps from the shoulder. All of my crevices whinny as the frission of quick movements grates growths there to a crumbly residue which peppers out of them. I trace the railing up-bow, and the captain gives jerky chase, creaking the plosive squeak of fungalmovement. And sporepufts seep from him, out the bottompocket seam, in a jetswirls from a tricorn brimtoob behind him.

And I slip. Crang my shoulder hard on a hot bulkhead. And scald it, red and wet. Already beginning to blister, and the captain gains on me. Steadies the harpoon. But I ghost behind another bulkhead, and then bound the port railing in one go and squealch into a soil shore, lapping in riverwash with smaller clumps in from the mold sea.

Exiting what had become cave unbeknownst to me, to the shuddering roar of a great chamber.

Waterfall.

Through a rough hewn oculus at chamberapex.

No more lovely than real architecture but meaning more, gauding with light, which too pours from it. And fresh airs. And the tinkling sounds of ethereal chords discordant in their naturalness, (not orchestrated).

This is real.

And too much.

Eyes blind
to it.

Tears come.

No fungus

lives here.

No mold.

I drop kneeward
dig with my fragile fingers
through gravelgrit, wet,
and find purchase on
each little bit. No
life coating it,
No deathslip
of suffusion
and moving
to a nearby
clutch of
carboxides
to begin
working on
them, and then
moving on.
Shuffling off.

None of it.

Just rocks.

There is

an

Up There.

My god.

The honor.
My swamp butt has progressed to trench crack. But I daren’t stop, go back. For though it seems I’ve been going all night, and there has been no sound of the captain’s pursuing me for some time (I occasionally pause, squelch in and stay silent for a long as I can bear, or more often now merely stand on a firm groud, slimy, or a supple bed of algal lichens). I daren’t turn jungleward. I am already making sufficient racket to draw anything with aural or tactile senses and locomotion. I pray they run straight out and are distracted by finding the rivier. Perhaps the hadn’t known about it until just then, and crawl in, drink their fill, lie in wait incase the frungalraged captain should come near.

Mist hangs. And through one gummy furrow a clearing, of sorts. Opaque as if omitting some faint light diffuse to hot fog. As I pause the efflux of my movement rushes past, pushing the mist back, teeming it past frondtrunks or through the collander orange net reaching out like a disembodied bustle; to reveal the bosuns jumpsuit and the harpoon tip poked out of a quicksand slumped pile of goop. He was down containment before he scarpered, how his mushstumps kept the harpoon, I can’t imagine, it is a stone if a ounce. I think of taking it, but the bosun is returned, in some sense. If the harpoon’s needed payment, so be it.

It seems darker. As if nights are doubleplussing a good foothold, in the jungle. By virtue that haze is a dispersion of physical stuff in a space, but your same body temperature (or hotter) and liquid enough to fill the space marked with the barrier of my skin, mucous membranes (internal and external), what is left of my tanktop. I am nearly sure my butt cheeks are tearing apart. But I keep moving. My insides do not feel wet, or dry. But uniformly spongiform. Suffused with viscera. And hot from a lot of rubbing.

Many things to think about.

I shed my tattered rags with some difficulty and stand under the rushing torrent. No sounds but in feelings. I do not look at my body.

The opening at the roof of the cave is ten meters away, maybe a little more. I can see no goodly way to ascend there. The walls are craggy rock, more or less treacherous, and mostly give way when I touch them into shaley sheets and clatter at me (not to be heard over the waterroar, but felt, sharply in their reverberations through my feet). Though it is so good to touch something cool and hard, that has not been wrought by man’s hands, wreaked their undoing.

I do not know how far back out the fauna stopped. There is none here. I could, I assume, trek out and back, pile up their fetid bits. Hew down larger chunks with the shale sheets, and drag them to a pile near the waterfall. Some would likely be washed away, that much is manageable. But there is so much cable on the boat. And provisions, of a sort. And even though the captain is still at large, and treacherous fauna is a finite possibility. I don’t see how I can’t go back. The boat should be moored, as it had been. I cannot imagine the captain with the wherewithal now to hatch a plan more complex than run me through? His crew.

There is no accounting for the mold sea. Its ways are its own.

I resolve to trek back. One more night. If my chronology is at all right. I hunt through shale shards for one with the bluntest bit on one edge, for a weapon. For innumerable reason. And move to stalk naked back the way I came.
But stumble and drop. My leg has broken off. It looks like a charcoal log (if I’m remembering them right), dense, returning no light but when the wet catches it, throws it back at my face.

And it bobs, dozily, in the headwaters, moves downriver, toward the mold sea.