

We Too

By

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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 fuff.

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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

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.
 6. Exercise.
- 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

Nothing Else, if
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

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.

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 pounding 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.

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 luminosity'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
huddled 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

chubic
 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 heartlump 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 cruft 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 ardor,

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 corece. 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 rhyme 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
hummm. 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 meaningfulness 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
pculiarites. 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 exhalt in the rejection. Those
big ruminants, barely capable as me, awing.

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 ~~in machinery~~ will become increasingly widespread. ~~When the highest peaks are covered, there will be machines that 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,

butterflies / spewing
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 Reischtags 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

blendt to it, backwards,
/ 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, ~~as 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 night side, 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.⁴

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.~~⁵

//

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 notwithstanding

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, athick

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

spherical sporepods. And
disappeared.

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 rhimecrust 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 dewswat. 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 crow's nest, 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 themselves,
 what'd been deep id.

Unmoored.
 Unrepentant.
 Cautious
 in the way noconsciousness

is.

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 megafloa. 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 grasses bowed under some other 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, full drunk
to comical distension.
Sated.

Small creatures emerged,
seemingly mammalian, but
covered with variant mottled
salamandrine skin. Red and
black splotchings, or nimbler
greyed out fleshtone hands,
fourfingered and weirdly

humanlike. Some fair faint
 moth descended, awing, to an
 eddying current, picked through
 moldclumps 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 scrabbles 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 railcru 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 ground, slimy, or a supple bed of algal lichens). I daren't turn jungeward. 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.

Works Cited

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