Dodo

Eric Scott Sutherland, 2016

It is possible to exhaust the fuel
My midnight mission to outlast moon
Then wake to cracked faces and facades
Plastic worlds shifting to lower plateaus
You’re a fine dodo, fool for not fighting
Back sooner. Somewhere another soul
Years in the darkness. Rain a comforting
Companion when feeling like this-loosened
From the realm of fucks and figures, forecasts
An angry metal bird tears the calm from the night
You can never get deep enough, ask every empire. You
Can never get enough, of anything you think you need, the
Things that feel good I like sex and drugs and I suppose dancing
Too and writing like this like it’s the only thing you can do, a weapon
That only harms the unseen enemies, is the way of peace in a time like this

PRAY ORCHID SIMON UP THE WALL

John P. Lackey 2016

Make a movie,
Make a mural,
Fake Arturo
Into thinking
I am Kevin,
I am sinking
Too much time
And too much thinking
Into carving
Up the river
Filled with nightbirds
For each finger,
Leaves are shaking
In my left hand,
Tremors snaking
Up the trees
Into ridges
In between
The little islands

Silver barkstone,
And the razor
Moon’s illumined,
It negates
The sound of children,
Follow footsteps
And directions.
Follow stimulants
From the small
In midnight’s glow
Across the rocks
That line the pen.
The hens all sleep
With one eye open,
Chuckles softly
In their boxes,
Knowing well that
Raccoons and lose
Remain a constant
Possibility.
Pray
Orchid
Simon
Up
The
Well.
Make a Bomb
Robin LaMer Rahija

Make a bomb.
Make a llama
with its neck too long.
Make yourself all fishy
for a river of blood.

Make yourself a fighter
with her fist gone wrong.
You are floating.
No. You are pinned
to the cork board
with a Hello Kitty pencil.
You are cork screwed
to the surface with your
grandma’s bobby pin.
You are Hello Kitty
in the belly of a fish
in the belly of a llama
in the heart of the bomb.

PRAYERS
Cobb Ransom

Potential, passing
I say
Just let me breathe
As my posture corrodes
A result of my symptoms
This behavior
A place far from sight
Who am I?
And who am I to judge?
I want to grow with the world
It's ripe animation
Beautiful people
I've been
Growing without it
Dirt covering to my eyes
Trying to find
The root I cling
To one
Please, water
Let me grow
Untitled
Patrick Maloney (Body Baghdad)

skulls for toes
bulldozed clouds
foster homes for eyes
for sale sign for mouth
coffee grounds of heaven
alarm clock for heart
snooze buttons revolt
aquarium for lungs
breath of fresh death
moons for fingernails
on chalkboard space
white out for feet
treadmills at dead end
for Achilles heel
glow worm for dick
under root of worship
Meteor for Adam's apple
Serpent for brain worms

Old twizzler for spine
Pull and peel for freedom
Lost planets for asscheeks
Old world meny go round
Spiderweb for hairline
Caterpillars for lips
Butterfly hips
Froggy words transform
Tadpole for tongue
Upstream in manger
Tombstones for hands
Harp for rib cage
In tune with the infinite
Empty room for ears

Her name is Giselle
Meredith Wadlington

I.
Sure, we all die alone, but
welcome to
the twilight
of the end of your life
is what it sounds like
when it's just (almost-thirty) you and a taco and an open world.

II.
i should probably say, for context,
A of all,
i'm eating a taco,
B of all,
i'm driving a vehicle,
C of all,
relevant substances include
One: Adderall XR. 20 mg
(i'm not proud of this)
Two: 20 minutes of sleep, 47.8 hours of not-sleep
Three: the memory of that 5th grader who was killed on Gordon Avenue two weeks ago,
whose memorial I just passed
Four: gin. 4 oz.
Five: April afternoons in Warren County
III.
She was killed, crossing the street, right fucking there, her memorial now glowing
literally on the doorstep of the housing projects.
And I'm driving down 185,
out to Richardsville,
passing tractors and
orchards and it's getting down to two lanes now,
and Kentucky is radiant.
And even though I'm passing old houses with crumbling foundations and
sheds behind them with sides you can see through
I look up and all I can see is
endless green -
yellow and blue and tea rose orange,
lavender,
and seafoam, sort of, on the crest of the tree line and
a little bit of chestnut or beige, on the side of the road,
and the rocks have chiseled out a space for
a few grays - a few light grays and dark grays - and
really deep liberty blue out on the horizon
where the knobs are.
And I don't even know this girl.
And she's never going to see it.
And I have no fucking clue
how I got to be this lucky.

The trees are endless.
They're endless.
They're really starting to come in for the summer.

IV.
I'm purely just driving,
dripping taco bits and
remembering the moment,
ten minutes ago,
when I wanted to die, but, not in the sense that
I have any intention of killing myself because,
it's just too much work.
Like when I'm sitting in my room,
early 2000's light hitting late 1800's wallpaper,
in April,
and thinking,
this shit is so magnificent,
and maybe that's why I shouldn't be here.

V.
The sun is setting
almost to the point where it's not as pretty anymore -
where it's kind of light baby blue.
The woods are getting naked and I turn a corner and
a brown and white bull comes charging straight at me
but of course,
he's just chasing some animal.
I'm fine,
I'm safe in my car.
He's not coming for me.
It seems like everything I pass out in Reedyville is mostly
one room shotgun homes or
beagle breeders or
patches of canola blooms or
service stations with square, wooden crosses or
openness,
knobs,
emerald and lemon chiffon and
signs that say "welcome" but
I'm just here.
I'm just here, by myself.
And I could keep driving -
I could keep driving straight into Nolin Lake,
or I could keep driving farther north until I run out of money or
lost the capacity to feel or
drift into oncoming traffic
and no one could have stopped me.
I'm just here with barns that no one's been in for 50 years
and that girl is never getting a second chance
on this same road, just 10 miles back.

VII.
When I think of her,
I don't think of her as a ten-year-old
or as a five-year-old.
I don't even imagine her adolescence
or her just unfolding preteen years.
I don't even think of her as a wide-eyed woman,
ready to be hurt.
I think of her
as a woman of 26,
feeling her way through the backroads of Edmonson County,
surviving with no consequence,
but nevertheless feeling her immediate power
as she tears across the surface of the earth.
I think of her as a woman confused,
and satisfied,
endlessly oscillating
between her moments of refuge and realness,
and purpose and pain.
I think of her having this truly incomprehensible world
out before her,
which is ultimately limitless
even if she doesn't know what to do with it.
I'm peeling into Edmonson County and
I don't know if I'll go find the lake or head north to Meredith, KY,
a town that's named after me.
x.

2005-2016.

I'm squatting on the balls of my feet.
Cars pass by.

I can't move my eyes
from the two dozen candles,
tall and skinny and burning in glass with icons of the sacred heart and angels of protection.

I feel
absolutely alone
and understood,
held tight by the soft glow of remembering.
A woman approaches in my blind spot.
We start talking.
He name is Larethera.
Her daughter lives in the house next to the crosswalk.
She tells me about the day that it happened,
a little bit,
but mostly she talks about her grandkids,
and she talks about her son who played football at Western,
who graduated with no student debt,
and she talks about how kids from Parker Bennett Curry can make it out of here -
she says to me,
a stranger at a stranger's memorial,
"Just because you're from this neighborhood doesn't mean you're not gonna amount to nothin."

I tell her that she has a lot to be proud of.
She doesn't know much about Giselle's family.
There's a flag on the memorial,
I notice it's from El Salvador.
She didn't even know.
We talk about the Housing Authority,
we talk about Kaleidoscope,
we talk about Parker Bennett,
we talk about the crosswalk,
we talk about the black kids,
we talk about the Bowling Green Senior High football team,
state champions.
We talk about the balloons that people brought,
we talk about Giselle's twin sister, who made it across the street,
we talk about the woman driving, her three children in tow,
we talk about the pain that is necessary to bring this town together.

Neither of us ever knew her.
I just now learned her name:
Giselle.
Giselle from El Salvador.
Born 2005.
Braaaaaiiiiinnnnnnnssssss
Blanca Spriggs

I wonder which part of the brain is the part that zombies are most after, like is there a certain region in our most higher functioning organ the thing that makes us the apex predator most, that is a delicacy to the undead?

Take the R-Complex.
The reptilian brain.
The brain that keeps my pulse, measures my breath, and sticks me at an even 98.6 degrees unless I’m sick or mad, the part that wants to fuck and eat and fight and will die for what’s theirs and it’s all theirs if they can see it/smell it/touch it, right? The most elemental part. The part closest to our spine.
Closest to our core.
The densest, most animal part.
Do zombies lunge for reptile,

or

is it the limbic system they want to find?
The emotions.
The suggestion.
Those attractive acid-sweet chemicals
pumping in the memories that point
to pleasure. To pain.
The part that says, yes, that one time,
that felt good,
the yes,
the please,
the white flag of us,
the no,
more, more,
more of that,
less of that, his scent—it reminds me
of that one time,
yes, let's do that again,
no, don't let it stop,

or is it

our neocortex,
the nerd,
the analyst,
the pundit,
the peanut gallery,
the most sophisticated parts
steady busy putting together puzzles
and songs and philosophy,
and beating computers at chess.
The delicate bits.
The frothy bits.
The parts that any time may
dissipate in a haze of rage.
The neocortex.
The last one to show up
to the party
and the first to leave.

Could we consider that maybe
zombies miss something more
than their cannibalistic urge
to consume,
that they wish to
imbibe something that reminds
them of what it was like
before?

Trash Poem
Zach Daddy
Listen, what kind of man or woman, walking
from porch to yard
to pull the trash, gets stuck
in mystified reveries, eyes strung to heaven
like ornaments dangling
from a tree? The pothead, you ask?
I want to be that which I am,
but more so. I want to be awake
all the time until I hallucinate trash cans
as bent over
people suffering like natives moved
along a river. Not like it's some abnormal fantasy—
Just a longing to feel
what I've appropriated as true—Now
wouldn't that be novel?
One begins to understand but never finishes.