

ALOFT

:

POEMS from THE HEIGHTS

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INTRO NOTES

The poet as an Anti-Anteaus, taking strength
from the atmosphere.

Upwards into air,

urges toward the ether-there—

the ascent

and its rains of acme.

Risings, scalings. Aerialism.

Zenith-bound.

Aspirations, Icarian longings,

elevations, head craned back to eye each eyrie—

heavenly empyreans.

Stone on stone erecting the Tower of what apex.

Poetry's affinity for the heights from
Parnassus to the present o'ertops us still.

*

THE CLIMB

Always you will know you have reached
the peak the moment your bootsoles
go out of sight, since you can only
get there by following yourself up.

Craning your neck to see that trail,
you'll plummet past the hope to scale
any summit if you overtake a guide
whose shadow is you, whose spoor

you are. Know him as the truer you,
the perfected precursor emitted by
this act of aspiration alone, this try—

stay in his tracks, obey the protocol
of all such quest-stakes, the miracle
no tree-line mars, the height it takes.

ANT DODGER

A suicide applicant
Who braces himself out
On a high ledge at noon
While busy peeking down

Noticed an ant crawling
Dottily on the ledge
Right
There near his left toe

Below crowds all pushed
Oblivious babbling
Omniscient like in the movies
Out whooshy doors

But his gaze halt ant
Ant the true ant
He dimly remembers
Not like them

So now
He hesitates
A million stories up
Shifts weight trying

Make his mind up
Distantly deciding
Whether to step
Before he jumps

On it
Or not

TOWERS

1.

Pisa's power to bend the head sideways
must be envied by history,
which can only force it forwards—
and Babel of course is praised
in every book (on every page)
for the way it slanticulates our words.

2.

Galileo drops a pound of lead
and a pound of feathers from the top,
one of which hits you on the head,
but which one—
(which head?)—
It makes you think, as well as stop.

3.

Every tower around here
is always in need of repair,
due to the superstitious habit
of leaning over
to peek into its 13th floor
to make sure it's still not there.

OCTOBER

The leaves fall, but not far enough for me,
so I take one up to the top of my favorite highrise,
the one whose transmitters watch farmers.
Out over the roof-edge I drop it, but my eye
swerves to the hemline of a nearby tourist.
I wonder if anyone will notice it. The wind
is certain to vacillate its journey;
a vacillation is a vagueness with intent,
and my leaf is light. —And has her camera
caught me in the act, prolonging it even further—
Her blouse blows but now I prefer most how
she caresses the camera, fondly, a personal
touch placed on what is after all a mere
automaton winking a robot eye . . . hmm, are mechanisms,
like, say, money, or credit-cards, are they
harder to put one's traits on than a flower
for instance, or an ear of corn . . . For example
I know someone who has a five-dollar-bill
taped up on their wall with the name "Frank
Sinatra" scribbled across it, an autograph,
according to them, but is writing (or forging)
your name on money or on a machine,—?!
does a signature make it more human, natural,
leafier somehow . . . hell, money is not a good
example, it's not mechanic, I'm sorry. Damn.
Back on the track: the leaf falls, the farmers
farm and the tourist films till her camera's
involuntary functions are exhausted . . .
we head back down. The elevator control-panel blinks
like a flightdeck or Star Tech or something,
then I notice buttons on her skirtfront—
I punch all the buttons on my shirtfront,
not knowing what direction that will get me,
yet suspecting that it too will not be far enough.

WALL

In the end I was deceived by particulars,
fingers offering themselves as examples
of what I could exist of at the finish of
the fruit of the bricklayers' melody if
only it would allow its accomplishments
to stand for the hands that set it forth
brick by brick, whose purpose was
the displacement of the local, the sole—
for unless that space could be placed
in one spot, what good was it. And so,
propped up to wall in or wall out what
should have buttressed me either side,
I felt myself slide with the shift, the twin
transition of stone on stone until the piles'
stoppage put a posit to its incipient
rubble, built by patient inches height
might climb to see one sun rise above
the sheer monument of—the measure would
be there, and the distance, though both
would retain their mean-sense, their
cramp-game of home, toe-molds, headhods
and all the other tools that are rare now,
whose use was owned a necessity once.

EVICTON PROCESS

Wreckball all the highrises:
then use the cornerstones of those
leveled towers to create my castle:
composed solely of foundationstones,
each one of which was blessed
with a ceremony, a literal
groundbreaking and therefore whole;
each block unique,
inscribed with ritual aggrandisements;
each planted solemnly:
each underpin-laid as the bedrock
its lesser brothers would rest on:
use only these rootstones to raise
the walls of my eyrie house hideaway
whose forbidding frame will have
no real infrastructure, whose form
will be a spiritual suspension
(cradle crux kernel hub core)
wherein each establishingstone
must cohere solid with the weight
of its having once been named
in salutation as such—but surely
when these maidenstones these
consecratalstones are placed
together to make home my dream
my ideal occupancy, then surely
due to the baseless act
of imagining this acme of architecture
I will never be allowed to live there.

TOTAL

Babel on the table falls,
my poem topples
into words
whose rubble shards

I try to stack back up until
they crumble still
again: but all
my efforts only pile

those collapsing tropes
in heaps
of worthless chips
which are

counted forth
with column patience
over and over
by the miser Silence.

THE WORD

I am the windowkeeper
of the Tower of Babel.

Whoever built this place
put one window at its top
and one door at its base.

I dream of the door far below,
where all the commerce,
the majestic intercourse
must pass—
or so I imagine.

Parsecs above that possible
bustle I attend our tower's
sole window.

Up here nothing.

Forget a lookout vigil:
this pane's too high
to spy an army
or a peacenik approaching.

Glass I wash and wash always
for the sake of the light/dark
it admits, but what is it?—

An eyepiece of clouds
for someone's height;
a cyclops outlet
for no one's sight.

(stanza break)

And what if
that door down there's
as little use as this—
and the doorkeeper too,
his efforts
fallow as mine—

if there is a doorkeeper;
if I'm not alone
in here.

If we exist—
if one day soon
we can open
our vents our hearts
simultaneously,

mightn't some stir occur
in the vacuum
of this hollow highrise,
provoking its ghost
to whisper at least
one pure, one
pre-word word—

Maintaining my post
would otherwise be a waste,
hopeless

if not
for the thought of that.

Long Distance Affair

The saliva gathered daily
by telephones across the world
from lovers yelling at each other
is an ocean with no bottom.

But say you pried apart those phones,
you'd find that all that wild white tide
of promises, cries, kisses, threats—
it also evaporates. The spit

is what we call each other,
I mean the words themselves, condensed:
distills us into clouds, into mist.

Rising clarified it drifts toward
Comsat, Telstar, there to orbit
closely around our distant lips.

A QUESTION OF LEVELS

I must find the prayer-step on
the endless stairs he said. Stop
at any of them, I advised, each
stratum from which one petitions

emptiness is equally false and
fatal. Climbers who gain the peak
think it speaks to them, that it
puffs breathclouds back at theirs,

exchanging exhilarations. So
therefore listen you may in fact
have reached your own and found
its landing waiting there and see—

but he left me like a new belief
in ladders or an old apostasy
of toes. Unfortunately either
requires I stand above or below.

THE BALLOON THAT LIVED ON THE MOON

The lower gravity was kind to it
It could bounce and soar higher
Than Earth allows
So the balloon was happier
By far
And soon forgot the puncture culture
We perpetuate down here
Where the hate-pins of our eyes skewer
The frailest inflation
The beadiest bubble is not safe
But up there
The bleak unpeopled landscape
Mirrors more faithfully
A balloon's own sterility and
Essential snootiness
Consider
What a round object by its perfect nature
Excludes
How its boundaries segregate the in from the out
And show what is enough
And what is less
So when you think of the balloon
That lived on the moon you might wonder
Why all its brothers and sisters
Because can't you feel how
When one tugs your hand
Deft with that upward urge how much
It resists your touch
How endlessly
You are not a part of it

FLEDGLINGS OF THE CYMBAL

Dawn, the ledge of day, is where
every dreamer's reflexes are tested;
one misstep is enough. Each waking
is a fall from that high surefootedness,

a descent from grace. All sleepers
thread their beds with this steadiest
of paths that they may arrive at last
in the plunge, the giddiness of worlds grasp—

Now who shall lift his hands to show
an hourglass in each armpit: birds emerge
screeching, we devour his wormgoin.
His moist declivities scour our habits.

When evening empties the buildings of
what is tall in them, we will return
each to his roost, ledging and listening
to a percussionist lapping against lily pads.

A LIFETIME YET

Look, in the sky, how those clouds turn
into a place which briefly appears
to be unique or is that pattern
repeated once every 33.3 years—

Termcycle which can't be seen unless
via long computers our sapient view
finds its site: or is this simply false
recurrence imposed upon a true

chaos. Can heaven's formations be
further figured beyond the phase
nonce of that one fate we suddenly
see: a third of the way through his

thirtythird year we hoisted Jesus
up to check this question out; he
was supposed to get back to us
on it but we're still on hold, aren't we?

MOONSHOT

Stalwart Gagarin's
(or is it stout
Cortez's)
cosmonautboot
quashes
the tender
rays that engender
Selene's
poetic praxis and
phases—
Yuri, what you do
imposing the siberian shoe
on its silver sand
just to be
the first man
to land there as John
Keats said stranded
on his peak in
Darien may ruin
our poems' home.
Please leave the moon
untouched
by any voyage but
our verses.
Bring
that Soyuz spacebus
back to earth and sing
quest-else to come—
Tuned lunar time
how pacifically
we'll praise
the usual discoveries.

ISSUE

All solar worlds are the same:

no inspiration
rises from the ground—
instead
it descends from above

to find secure a spot to pray
for crevice for haven.

From the land surrounding me
some sill holds firm in
its origin, and yet
how thwart all design grows.

Always the interval arrives,
sauve guillotine
honed on its air
of precedent, of accident.

Fissure to tap the well's outgurg—
even that surge
seems prefixed from on high—

Its word crowns descent
with enemies/energies animal
in nature, or

questionable as the machine
spirit crypt
that crumbles
beneath this issuance.

STANDARD

I was going to poem
our lack of patriotism
our treachery toward
the land that port-arms us

to type it out onto blank
spittle with my teethkeys
but then I noticed the flag
that always wavers above

traitors like me the flag
that always flucts and shifts
like any lone allegiance
in the wind and then I saw

sewn upon the flag as emblem
a depiction of a flagpole
so at least one thing is loyal
to that which bears it

UNEARTHED TO EARTH

flappilating like fire caught the shot
bird scuds mud with its misflying dyings—
but see in poetry's sky the knott
likewise flails and fails to find his wings

POEM

please don't scold
the kids who hold
lollipops up
for the raindrops
to lick at on
their way down

what a waste
but imagine the taste
of rainbow thunder
if you could get
your tongue up under it

HAIBUN: THE JUGGLER TO HIS AUDIENCE

One must be able to juggle at least 3 things to be a juggler (2 is not enough). But whatever the 3 things are that one juggles—whether it's (for example) father, son and holy ghost; or mother, father, child; or id, ego, superego: whatever this minimal trinity consists of—the juggler must acknowledge that his audience is not external to the act; and the juggler must confess to that audience:

One in my hand,—

one in the air—

and one in you.

SHOWER

I tie my handkerchief
to a kite
to try and dry
the cries of
the clouds up there.

Pour, pour:
oh, if only
I hadn't loaned
my umbrella
to that submarine!

EN PASSANT

While orbiting
the earth
at a height of one millimeter
I notice
it tickles.

[UNTITLED]

The trafficlight on Lovers Leap never changes to red.

THE FATE

(for Anne-Marie Stretter)

Standing on the youthhold I saw a shooting star
And knew it predestined encounter with the sole love
But that comet crashed into the earth so hard
Tilted its axis a little bit not much just enough
To make me miss meeting her by one or two yards.

SEANCE

Around the readiest table
a manicurist with a hammer
nails in place all hands together
to hold the ring of our focus clung

and keep this communion open:
like jousting airliners the dead
must circle before they land
along the medium's tongue.

NOT THIS WAY

if that bird soars across
this wall which halts us
why does it then
fly back here again

NOBLESSE OBLIGE

I always put on a whole-slick tuxedo
when I jump off tall buildings so

when I'm sprawl in the streetdust
that passersby can say, "Oh no: and just

when he was at the height of his success;
look at that tux—now that's the way to dress."

SUMMIT

on this hill at sunset
I will feel the contrast
of it going down
and me up here for
a moment as final

HAIKU IN H

that cloud overhead
has a hundred places to go
and none of them here

THE WOULD BE NONCHALANT (prosepoem)

I try to shrug it off, but when my shoulders poke themselves up to form the shrug they get stuck, and I slump down trapped inbetween these shoulder-peaks; so I live in the valley of a shrug, in its perpetual shadow.

[UNTITLED]

Nature doesn't need a mountain to show it exists; mist will suffice. But the poet must painfully pile up every pebble of his absent summit.

SUMMER DAYS

a butterfly with a sandwich
bite out of one wing flies away
from the inhabitoads of our shadow
or tries to

[UNTITLED]

Searching it goes,
alone at night,
—my beacon of ashes.

ADULTERER WITH NO MOUTH AMUSES
WORLD*

Not having a mouth is no joke! Imagine an ax left by somebody, sinksank into some treetrunk: and each day you go by, the embedded ax seems higher, higher, until finally, one day, jumping, you're just barely able to brush the fine of the grain of the bottom of the axhandle with your fingertips—and yet the tree has not grown. Nor have you shrunk. Imagine: imagine trying to explain this to someone if you didn't have a mouth.

* Newspaper misprint

LESSON

Even if the mountain I climbed
Proved to be a duncecap really,
It was only on gaining its peak
That that knowledge reached me.

[UNTITLED]

a jet zooming by
may see climbers on a cliff
and never know if
those souls ascend or descend—
to the fast slow has no end

RACIST POEM

we had our chance Pilate
washed his hands of it
and left it up to us

we had our chance
we could have chosen
one of our own
a thief
a murderer

the cross the tomb the
resurrection
then heaven
the right hand throne
a smirk on his face Barabbas
one of us

we could have chosen him
for son of god
might've stuck up for us up there
someone who was flesh
of our flesh

our kind
a pure one hundred
percent human
but we goofed

(stanza break)

we picked that halfbreed
that changling
from Nazareth

we had our chance Barabbas
a thief
a murderer
one of us

UP

I'm climbing a pyramid of skeletons
so architecturally sound and structured
intactile, how neatly the whole locks
into unison beneath my feet as I go
higher, grabbing a pelvic-set above me,
a gape-jaw hoisting, never a grope
is needed, my hands can always find
a secure hold to elevation. I hear you
down below me, your breath misting
my opalescent soles, all naked like me.
It's such a long haul. How far the peak—
although I trust I shall have reached
rest like these overs when you unders
don't hesitate to scale my own bones.

A COMIC LOOK AT DAMOCLES

Sometimes Damocles is less afraid that the sword
 may drop
than that his enthusiasm for his plight might
—through the illogical process of displacement—
cause him to rise exuberantly up to it.

Once he glues a plastic bust of himself atop his pate;
once, while paring his fingernails with a pocketknife,
he sees an ant on the floor and throws it at it.
But all (both artistic and magic) remedy fails.

By old age he has quite forgot the deadly blade:
to his feeble sight, that gleaming flash above him
is himself, I mean his soul getting a headstart, already
 in flight.

In heaven he hears about an angel who tied a noose
to his own halo and hung himself from it, but sees
no way to apply the case, retroactively or otherwise.

WIDOW/WIDOWER'S WINTER

Outside, the snow is falling into its past . . .
I do want this night to end.
In the fireplace,
a section of ash caves in.

The fall day you were buried,
birds went over,
south,
thick enough to carry someone.

They took my gapes of breath.
—Their fuel?
We are together in some birds, who fail.

I didn't want to look down, to glimpse your grave,
its heroic little mound
like the peck of dirt we hope to eat in our life.

Note:

Line 14 comes from a phrase I remember adults saying to me as a child when I dropped a piece of food on the floor: "Pick it up and brush it off —don't worry, you eat a peck of dirt in your life anyway." (Perhaps only the poor do this.)

DEATH AND THE MOUNTAIN

"There is no theme for old age
but death and the mountain."

—Arab proverb

You should see the treeline on
that mountain
of update bulletin news;
no avalanche can blacklist me—
The twigline on the tree
said: You should see him on talkshows

sandpapering his
mug off totempoles, carved
of old, of pine—
Just past the christline
on that cross is
one sitcom one summit of this; scarred

as a skyline of thorns it grew
up, imperious, pious. . . . To
blindfold the precipice
before leaping
from it, okay; but try keeping
a straight face

when the punchline comes "kersplat"—
There, old skin-quilt,
saint peacock hedge! Feverchart
that wedges the door shut.
I see it
he said. I see my mountain's peak-sized fate.

[UNTITLED]

mute/hard

forboden

words

line the mountain

down which we melt—

stones that wore our

trickle tongues away

FROZEN
(to RN)

Oh I know it must feel
Measureful

To be the river—
Source of that force

Each field each flower
Each fountain seeks—

And then of course
I have to shiver

Remembering how—
How few of us ever

Make it down
These mountain peaks.

ZENITH

Once a rocket lived in the soarway
Now it's gone
Only a bird fills our sun socket
Then travels on

Hovering at all angles to
Our tallest days
Where the lion says needle star to god
Far lingers no trace

I wanted to share
The occasion of that height
Even if it was only a while
The moan-length of a laugh I had

I wanted to stay there
But I failed at the sight

THE VINDICATION (prosepoem)

If it were only possible to launch enough satellites up, one apiece for each of us down here on earth, billions of spysats programmed to monitor us all individually, that's the important thing: that each one of us would have his or her own personal private skysat; and then, when our (our!) specially-designated sole-focused fetish-trained mysat was finally and totally locked onto us, what secrets could we exchange with it, how confide its include codes would grow, how large its zoom would contain us: each unique DNA traced and zeroed in on to find us, to separate us out, tell us apart from all the space trash next door. Unfortunately that many satellites in the sky at once would form a hatchshell shield surrounding the planet like a restoration of Ptolemy's cosmos and would cut off all solar energy resulting in the pandeath of vegetation and terrestrial life itself, a small price to pay, a minor consequence aftermath of having satisfied if only for one brief interval the universal desire to go recognized, singled out and beamed upon; of having appeased our deepest need, to be seen, to be known.

THE I DID

One memory from childhood
how when it was summer and hot
at ground level where I stood
above me I saw the tops of trees
palpitating in a proper breeze

that never came down to ease me.
I can't say I swan why I remember
what it is that makes it linger or
else enriches such a significant
nor could I see it now if I went

on a breathless day and looked up
I would not be far enough away
physically for the contrast: memory
needs that distance for its truth
to swerve from the present's path.

Is it right to hold the past fixed in
former attitudes like tops of trees
or whatever it is records history's
external focus switched to days
depictions drawn by winds upon

clouds or branches flexing wide
their leisure of purpose pause
from the hell of here. Sight cannot
even in summer when it is hot
share the air enjoyed by the eyed.

TEA-SAT

The hand is a cup
that must crack
open to be filled
with that which
saves but can't be
saved. Garbage for
instance: the pail
overflows to show
why our nation's
weapons are high
in the sky, why
they need a lethal
laser up there with
its unbearable
purity, a perfection
saints reach rarely
if ever—that killsat
crystal concentrates
the state. Deadbeams
shoot everywhere
it aims. The earth
must part to let
them, split fingers
rudder the result.
The body always
can spill more than
it holds. The pail
overflows to show
it was alive until
hot rays came down
seeking the dross,
the loss our rockets
rose to redeem.
We pray their
crochery will bear
up this aperture.

DIRECTIONS

A kite in the shape
of a map floats
over the land it depicts,

but at night no-one sees
its roads at the end
of which a child feels

his hand tugged upward,
disappearing
in salutations.

UN-ISRAFELLED

Am I similar to slime enough, be-
Mimic with muck? Since Poe blew it that Tennyson—
"No poet so little of the earth"—equals sky,
I (boy bouffant) unto the realm of whom rise, I

Who synonymous with none, am anonymous
Without everyone: is that the light cast
From haloes; does it make the shadows of the heads
They glitter over smash down obliterating

The body. We twitch our face-costumes; scratch;
Crud dangles like a noose tied to high c.
Or is that noise claws—a phoenix scraping

Let me in on the door of a crematory,
A comet's dandruff. Its scars are ridges
Ledges, where the flesh of this ascent rests descent.

Note:
"None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel" —Poe.

THE WAY

the juggler could
amputate parts
of himself and
juggle them so

as to fill the air
with synecdoche
the boffo finish
one final echo

to climax his act
to sacrifice limb
by limb his all

transformed to ball
that juggler'd
never fall

MOUNTAINMAN, MY MOUNTAINMAN

For the prohibition of a semen teeming
with hectic, sibilant selves, scales,
inordinate, alternate, enriching
the rumors of pencils that erase ease;

scrotal indelible herd stridencies,
battery-acid propellers acquiring torridity,
horsewhip larvae, nacre-packed, pure,
imploring avalanche taunts, vidcameo;

or accidental concussions of saliva,
diving under necessary dormitories,
dune-pilfered pillows, abbreviations of blond;

oh male enclaves where the me is maintained
stoic, aloof, glacial. My snowcap pushed
down over one eye, in play, by the wind—

A CLOSER VIEW

A lighthouse up to its head in your hair
would show more than we comprehend here,
scenic venom. Like a harbor of slammed
windows and out across the path whose feet

we'd further have to erase from ours if this
picture wasn't vicious enough to include us—
even if its lack of focus is elsewhere. See
the sky *begat begat begat begat* with birds, that cloud

clapped softly in windfold now, before
the moment were over except for your sayso.

Flash exit the extremis penis once tried
to hold, composite encroachment for
vistas of void to inherit, where, shadow's
transparent adjunct, I sit for its portrait.

EL POEMO

Little squiggly worms on the surface
of my head. I brush them off, but
more ooze up from within;
an endless supply it seems.

All I learn turns to the belief that all
my exhalations rise up into the sky
to form an O which hovers there
to watch me struggle for breath and die.

I always pause to grimace at the wound,
but the wound does not hesitate at all.
That would be an acknowledgement.

That would be a response.
A collation of purpose, a balm, a bosom,
even a poem perhaps.

ELEVATIONS

Things that announce themselves
from faraway, like thunder or death,
are good to end a poem with.

An elevator with no floors grips
that gordian space Borges called
Aleph: in the story of the same name

as not I can be found expounding
the heresy that no poet's words empty
any cavity other than my heart-well!

Higher lower the pleady ones go.
Every edge will find its echo.

A valley filled with rusting padlocks:
on the hills around it keys brood
peeking down at their former homes.

MOUNT BLANK

Snow, the polkadots of vile clowns, falls. Melt to a god-moat, world. Admit that everything the cortex thought lost was probably what the vortex thought found, though both of them

could be wrong: from brain to drain the range of maybes remains protozoan-moan-criminal, collateral closeups of whatever the hell.

A disguised zoo we keep blowing up, earth retaliates: lifts all its continental prose in Andes-island rifts to fracture these words—inclement gangster and diving nun, please

continue to dictate your own. Begin when the edge executes its option to end, when my merging meaning veers too close to stand.

THE ZENOIST

He stays here standing on a chair
and paces off the steps to the door
or still further, aping escape from
the rat-race or death or karma or

whatever's gaining ground: instead
of late, he speeds up, the chairseat
blurs a flurry of feet until the trip
he's traveled noplac is moon-far.

How'd he make it up onto that chair?
That was a distance never to be
crossed, or even embarked upon,

a hopeless quest. Deciding to depart
must have seemed such a feat once:
he fares everywhere for that start.

I LIVE ON THE LOWEST

ledge it's still fatal
to fall from while

my neighbor on
the below-one

merely loses any
skeletal integrity

and lives to stab coupons
for lowyield posterity:

he's lucky
compared to me

and to all
the tenants above me

because when we fall
we die.

DREAM AMID BED-WOODS

You must pull down sheets from these linen trees,
Blankets too, a pillowcase in full leaf,
But can't: to snooze amongst their fruits, beneath
The sheath of that composite canopy's

Roost, you must raise yourself past hammock heights—
Up where its deepest roots feel doubly sapped,
That dormitory orchard might lie wrapped
And ripe with you, whose foliage still invites

More lure of surface sleep. But must you trust
The ease in these boughs, the sway of whose loft
So often now wakes vows to never rest,

To somehow remain afloat, to resist
All berth above: you must push off this soft
Palletted grove, this tall, forest mattress.

ADMASS (ORBIT)

The comet whose path is contentment
shall seldom appear: compared to it
Halley's daily. What eye flared to it
can spy that rarest speck in the spent

of space debris—moonspat asteroid
magi GPS Bethlehem by,
bauble the Hubble holds in gem-high
illumination. What vocation void

I have to pray for that view ray caught
by truer poets, whose verse converts
at first sight. What may they sing as sought
in such light, but I will not pay church

no matter how witchburn-bright that tailsphere
nails our night with its sales pitch Christ Here.

DEPOSITIONING

so billions of humans for millennia looked
at the blue sky of a summer day and saw it as
bright until one day the boy Rimbaud looked
and saw that shining normal blue as darkness

and said I have removed from the sky the blue
which is darkness but his saying so did not
result in heaven being stripped bare of blue
to leave only immense endless light and hot

sun nothing but sun from horizon to horizon
all-point eye-encompassing gorging our view
no and in fact and amazingly his sly vision
or petition proved to have been only a sight

true and all despite his deposition the blue
which is darkness stayed it remained bright

ALOFT

when the balloon bursts
where does all the air
that was inside go

is it bound together briefly
by the moisture
of the human mouth
that birthed it

poor pouch of breath
long expulsion of nothing you
must dissipate too
nor remain intact
no matter how pantingly
against the outer atmosphere
you might try to secure your
whoosh-hold

and what an effort
what heave and heft-work
what strain of frame what rib-rift
to have to lift to shift around
all that oof and uff

why strive and huff just
to stave off death
to survive
to be a substance a stuff

(stanza break)

to live live as a pocket
a cluster
a cloud
to maintain your interior
mode

I can understand
that having once been
contained in bouyance
you'd want to retain
that rare coherence

you'd pray to stay a one
to remain a unity an
entity a whole in
this unencased heaven

but smatter of ghost
how can you persist
or save yourself
when all us others disperse

so let it slough
dissolve in draft
little whistlewhiff
pathetic kisspuff
flimsiest flak

(stanza break)

up into the sky goes
two lungs worth
of earth
unstrung
unloosed
the exhaled
soul of a boy a girl

alloonaloft
aloftalloon
lost

ON THE AIR

once every student barber
to earn his certificate
would first have to lather
a balloon and shave it
then if it didn't burst
he'd pass his last worst test

but I wonder what happened
to that schooled balloon
did they use it again
or was it shown mercy
let go set free
to fly away safely

scrapeskin for a sheepskin
one nick will kill this bubble
let pupils skilled in scruple
cut its rubber stubble
here only dull shearers win
the hirsute-pursued laurel

a master's in mustache
a doctorate in down
summa comb or brush
cap-strop-and-gown
more honors-blown diplomas
than tenured hands can slash

(stana break)

our blood stays bearded for
that educating puncture
light hearts inflate and then
learn one slit-throat lesson
to flunk is remedial
if pop-quiz pops us all

undrape look up and see
those balloons still floating over
our razor-grad degrees
they hang on the air
they dangle from a hair
no blade can sever

GESUNDHEIT

Sneezes wouldn't be so bad if they filled balloons.

How many sneezes on the planet at any given time;
and if each sneeze filled a balloon,

imagine (bless you!)
all those sneeze-balloons floating in the air.

But a sneeze-balloon might be rather fragile—
more like a bubble than a regular balloon . . . hmm.

A sneeze is sort of like a balloon pop:
sudden, violent, unforeseeable. Out of nowhere.

In either case, burgeoned or burst, this transfer
of ether occurs wherever Entropy beckons,—

see its deadly equality shining up there,
glittering like globules of star saliva,

worlds atchooded by all.

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