

Three Poems

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Speaking & Dreaming

Last night you said, 'I sleep about dreaming'
and walked into my sleep like a city.
Sleep standing like glass between air:
two glass skins rippling two
metres apart. You say Rem
Koolhaas built this
to insulate our song
from sound, insula is an island
shifting beneath our sleep as we sing.

Tell me whose drawing this is. It is
melting. Where are the cameras
pointed? We are shrinking.
My mouth is shaped like a bow,
your back is glass arched, we are
speaking like a cello
in diagrams of sound. Tell me
if this is where the Aral Sea lost
its Eastern Lobe.

Tell me if they can see us from space
lying in the glass. I am trying to shake
off the strangehold
of syntax. The salts and toxins are
a great help. They are eating
our words. The camera is a mirror,
you propose. The city is twice.
A proposition, Wittgenstein wrote,
is a logical picture of reality.
Under glass, the language of disaster

languishes like a tongue
asleep.

THREE LETTERS

I. Letter on a dream

I woke up this morning having dreamt that four new elements have been added to the periodic table. They sank to the bottom of my mind like words or synthetic rocks, superheavy. I arranged and rearranged these particles of primary matter on my clear blue mind slate, and you. I am writing because you were in my dream, prodding it like it was water. It was water. Each element a different tonal cluster, plunk, ringing in my plunk like Listerine. You spoke nonstop of the molecular unconscious, its two poles: paranoia and schizophrenia, molar and molecular, the nonhuman sex, the problem of affinities, the dwarfism of desire, terror and law, Seaborgium in the evolution of the state Americium, capitalism and schizophrenia, old earths and new, I had my ears to the ground you were vomiting clay screaming for Darmstadtium. You were drawing furrows in my water. We were screaming over and above each other. ORGANIZE, EXECUTE, EAT LOCAL, & MAKE the police take the Hippocratic Oath. Abstain from doing harm. I hope you are doing OK. Do write. The sky here is unfixed with the atomic structure of milk.

II. Letter from the sea

I am writing to you
from the Department of Public Grievances.

I have a token with 3343 on it.

I have a tent and a can of beans.

We are all queuing politely.

We all migrated south to breed
and north to die
and everywhere
for everything else.

There is nothing
at the end of the queue but the sky.
We will all swim to islands. Some of us
have cell phones. We used to call each
other under water

to confuse the sharks. We didn't believe
in the superiority of species, or jaws.

We were only swimming to safety.

Only safeguarding the nation.

Only saving the economy.

Only trying to help.

We were waves bigger
than ourselves,
confused
as light.

No,

I am not surprised by your silence

on the future of public amenities.

A deaf whale is a dead

whale. Silence equals nothing.

Say nothing about the future
of health
care.

The National Health Service
has been diagnosed
with signs of
trauma consistent with blunt force.
The blunt force of sonar
waves
has blurred public
conscience.

Conscience is intuition. Or
aptitude that assists in judging
the right from
left,
regardless of generation. And
humans
are migrant birds, like whales,
confused as. Say nothing
about my sea. Say nothing.

And don't write back just yet.

You will only accuse us of the politics of paranoia,
of migrating, mating, mutating, of something or the other.

III. Letter on leaving

The trees are leaving. You said in your last letter that the cataphylls would rise, someday. I did not write back because I knew someday was your way of saying nothing. Yes, I know cataphylls are protection and you were on to something there. Something like a metaphor. In any case, I was a bit thrown by your resort to metaphors, knowing that the tradition of rhetoric a la Aristotle is too mild for your flam. And I know you are thinking now of how I would always confuse flamboyance flambé Flaubert. They all mean the same thing set alight with the right Cointreau etc. But yes, your metaphor got me thinking about metaphors. And no, meaningful language needn't reflect logical correspondence. So maybe again, you were saying nothing. Correspondence in the writerly way is nothing. So I didn't write. But I know that cataphylls often die in performing their function. Cataphylls are leaves. Cataphylls are spines. Scales. Bulb scales, corm scales, lizard neck scales, onionskin, a protection bubble scale, scales of safety, um, parents. But the real reason I am writing today is that the trees are leaving. Decisive creatures, they have shaken themselves out of the ground, sometimes splitting. Roots taut, they are swalking to all the edges of land. And then some plopping, some diving with grace but all going headfirst. Leaves and heads and cataphylls rising, trees are fish. Root tails and branch fins softened in biomimetic glee. Aristotle huh? I have been following the propulsive and transient forces of their propelling bodies. Need meaningful acts reflect logical correspondence? They may be on to something. I might join them.

We are searching for a semiotics of the atmosphere

We want a semiotics that is clean blue, blunt at the edges and very soft. We want something that we can understand. We want information beyond informatics. We want to know everything. We are interested in the synthetic nature of knowing. We want to be safe / We want to know : We are practiced in the art of paradoxes : We want to be safe / We want to know. We the people. We the people of a nation. We the people are very aware that we cannot have a national semiotics of the atmosphere, although that would be pretty great for some of us.

We the people know that we cannot trust language because language is a tool. Language is a tool of the government. Language is a tool so obsolete that we are still smirking at its cruel wit. We are smirking anxiously. We want to know / We want to be safe. We want intelligent air. In 1958, Lewis R. Long wrote a philosophy of air intelligence for the CIA. 'Air intelligence must be employed ... for the security of the nation.' Intelligent air, like intelligent life knows beyond borders. Intelligent air is a confidential clean blue, blunt thing, with feathers.

We the people wonder if all our particles are human. We the people know that our particles have blown over across borders. We the people have dividing cells and animal instincts and chemical fluids and particulate physics. We the people do not have legal rights for some of our parts. We the people are learning to appreciate the raw beauty of our contingencies. We the people are aware of our disintegrating.

We know that the market is a machine that lives and melts in air. After decades of cohabiting, we coevolve, copulate, coprosper, concubine. In a synthetic symbiotic form of ontological complexity, we the people breathe things in and breathe them out. We consumer, we consummate.