

Photographs of Pluto

Yoke the mountain to the moon,
potato shaped Sharon. Show up when I am divided.

Soaked in puss from slave wage shoulder boils
her varicose veins sold for a dollar tip and your comfort.

Our fury found its apex but then you shared the news, Pluto!
I woke to the dream, the methane moat

frigid hills and heat deep. No—thing, no—one ratcheting their flag in the crust.
All at once I am Shiva again.

Twenty four torches whirl around my heart.
In regards to this and that cobras and tigers can dull their teeth,

the planets have gifts for me now.
All that remains in my mind is the ash

as indestructible as this dance
Thank you tiny gadget, seven years gone.

You, some days I, harness the wisdom of big
and bring it home to rest.

Free Silence

I

Eva Dawson
Works from 2014-2015
www.freesilence.com
Art by Adam Grossi
www.adamgrossi.com

Unfastened: *Around 1945 the question becomes: Sleepyhead
Since the world is ending may I eat the candy
Necklace off your body?**

The end is closer, footsteps softer,
look now, take care don't wake it up.
What time will it be over? How many
times have I apologized since I woke up?

Take care don't tell me "be softer." I'm sorry.
At the end I feel sick and soft sit closer
to my fever green edges like unfastened chains
on deep sleep before it's time to wake up and do over.

*Ben Lerner, Mean Free Path

In Due Time

For my beloved Vanessa

in my garden i would beam
at four ivy wound oaks braying, wild
tall grass red at the roots

the baby wails outside the window
by the bed it is two in the morning
i am perfectly alone

when the wind stops i feel
a friend's ring grind in the web
between fingers

cradle the pause
for a few days following
enough to feel the love you feel for me

My Friends and I

mother sees her dead baby in the little boy's face
galloping through the sandbox

i see my friend spiraling in purple bag strokes
around the eye in grace's painting

i hear his skin wreak like tuesday afternoon marlboro smooths
damp in the porch ashtray

logan reminds me to see the gaps in the circuit
i remind myself to occasionally embrace

how the chitta vritti puts memory
where it doesn't belong, wadded up undies in the macrocosm icebox

our last conversation concerned his qualms with the translation,
we did something violent when we abandoned the alliterative verse.

i see us and the texts we cannot read
chaotic gods nauseated with play, a brawl

Brahma bids first weaving the text
rolling it smooth with an ethereal pin

club in one hand, machete in the other Shiva descends
case

number

gender

definition

syntax

fall wet and hot from the belly of the disemboweled flower

i think it is as Anne Carson suggests
what is a preposition but a hole in the continuum

what is translation but standing on the cliff slippery with mud
caked on the ballmounts of bare feet staring into the pitch black crater

there is no word in english for the russian
with a word for every word

with a sign for every signified hue of pulse
would we need poetry?

Sheaths

I put the beer on the table, the moment
of conception put this shape of a skull in my head.

Always two conversations under the same moon one
is at this table with the gnashing mandibles of kids my age

and the other left the room before I took my seat
because ISIS took part of Ramadi this morning

swift and split open like the explosion in the dream
took the infant's head right off. What were we talking about?

Because the young black woman laid face down for hours
with a hole in the back of her head a bloodshot eye

of a drunken Polyphemus gushing the truth that nobody
hurt him because cops are not murderers to you they are cops for now.

I see an aerial god peer through the cavities in their chests
through the fissures in tissue and intervertebral disks

mighty with invisible perspective, he sees the whole
and all its broken shards but obscures the peripherals on purpose

like Caravaggio's shadows unlit after closing hours.
Because your savior is a sadist, because we are all sick.

I put the wine in the cup and set the bottle down.
You said the painting is about the sublime and trauma

and I take a closer look at the grey strokes.
Off and out my other mind sees toes dangling off

the great big cliff when the clouds part and Aha! sets in
because there you are checking your vitals and what nature, wow.

But then you're actually the person standing behind the person
with their toes dangling, no need to look to feel them jump

and where's the conceptual difference now, Kant?
I put my body into a bed and turn off the light.

Orange Walls, Red Beard

For my friend, Jesse

Each week of infinite winter I lunge for a different hue.
When the city is grey for days what else is there to do?

This week it's red and tannic, a sweet apple skin,
the juicy cut of red peppers sliced fajita thin.

A bubbling snag from your crooked tooth smiling under your hood,
crack me open, blood in the yoke, wake me up for good.

The Lesson

I tow an empty basket
to the Gurupurinma moon

bloated, pimpled with craters,
pickled carcass of a womb.

Neither of us quite dead,
to few this is such big news.

Lavender waves paw black moss
their whispers hot and mute.

I take issue with the obsidian pit
I tote from here to there

thrown in the trunk, under beds where I fuck,
see the weaving grey and bare.

Ida, egg in the nest,
will parlay at the crest of the dune.

A capsule for her tugs and churns,
maniacal trickster moon.

A gaping laugh yields foaming sores
where she ground her teeth at night.

I tongue ten thousand canker sores
and vomit up my fright.

"I will not make a bed of your basket
you will not make a home in my death

this lattice is your woven flesh
the threads your nerve and breath.

If you leave your filth in the sand
I doom you never to love."

A roar, a coo, I cannot be sure
she was so far above.

Pebbles shiver under ten toes tipping
a blue heron sashays to flight

I loosen the noose and craft new loops
handles to hook on our might.

Street Café with Box of Flowers

gurgle foam—thick—inside is safer
where rain beads bounce and crack
avian bones on glass
they cant get in
the street café with box of flowers

sour steam push through my sockets—out
up, a night sky murky and wasted and
moon milk clogs my nose before the sneeze

that crisp taxi horn rips apart
one thousand—thousand loose shoe laces
unwinding on the sticky midnight city floor

Mind in the Viscera

May is the month. Kapha in the pollen.
White puffs hover heavy, tongue in the cheek

quell the itch in the tissue, cheek grinds the tongue
nucleus thrusts nucleus bursting into consciousness.

Planet's mucus propels, Cook County has a great big sneeze.
Beat the dusty rug dog-shake the filth off the face.

Ice in the coffee, drought in the temperate rainforest.
Transition in routine, less panic more work.

Yeast in the chemistry thick white and stubborn
Chicago tilts the PH, warming of the west soaking in the heartland.

Obama warns the coast guard this will affect your jobs.
Mind on the checklist, hands in my parts, hydrate now

dry up and choke tomorrow. Parting of the hands,
listen for the last words you would say, feel mind the viscera.

Freyja Rides Fixed Gear

6am moment of clarity: I love the morning,
early Eastern photons glitter in last night's sewage puddles.

They gleam the color of safe. So, is this my hour because I am she?
The relief makes my stomach spit.

I made it. Phone, keys, wallet, bike, body, mucus, fluids,
heartbeat all still mine. A plaque at the Field Museum

reads Freyja, The Lady, fears not the night.
Take it back, her etched eyes gleam, take it back.

At midnight I found her riding over broken bottles,
a throb in my intercostals every time the men emerged

but she licked my left ear like mother cat,
soothing Ida channel, my lunar half.

The tickle of her whiskers demanded
"keep on, almost home." An intentional bullet, she cuts

through the black onyx mist on her feline driven chariot.
Screeching like a woman after the beating,

she howls like a dull blade hacking away at neurotransmission
alone in a solitary cell, all the way to the field, muddy and stomped.

Falcon feathers and golden locks lacerate her breasts.
She hisses at them all. Fearsome Valkeries follow her into the night

the moonlight wraps ribbons around their hamstrings, ankles,
crowns. Down they go towards their woman's work

for the world of men where the choosing begins:
which of you entitled ghouls will fall first tonight?

Spring Cleaning in Pursuit of Lost Gratitude

Tomorrow is April. The words—just enjoy it—fall
between bones in my ears mud sliding down

the back of my throat and into viscous lungs
like flat stones smacking still water.

And so I haven't figured it out yet.
The other point is I don't enjoy that.

Take a hammer and pound four pegs
through the flailing corners of a life—see home here.

In the center make a space, covered but enough
light carves through the worn lattice in the tarp,

where the wind is softer. Here there is a place
to hide from the new moon, blinding in her opulent loneliness,

where the cracks in a blanket of winter flesh seam
protected from the thawing gravel and dust.

I will come out when I can enjoy it.
I won't need it forever (long enough to enjoy it?)

A steady song hums deep in my mind:
Spring is remembering a temporary stay will do.

Lost track of time, I'll call tomorrow no doubt we'll both be alive.
Ten thousand unplanned obligations shockwave through lymph,

bloated then wrinkled like father time's undereyes,
unseen in my paystub. Mostly I feel wrung out.

*The joke of evolution is that it is a teleology without a point,
that we, like all animals, are a project that issues in nothing.**

Toddlers eat sand in the shade of monstrous oaks
bursting like bound breasts from the right angles.

Shamelessly urgent mission, only the trees will make it on time.
Time itself is your viscous project.

I am told there are no clocks on the walls of the Cook County Jail.
Teachers need to bring a watch, no phone.

Displace the fight to forage and hide, no ticking more pumping,
with the panic of letting your big boss down.

To get there put a knee in her back with her hands bound
and throw her naked into the jungle.

(Unless, of course, you've already killed her).
Recall the Baldwin quote, or was it from the Holocaust,

*"If they come for you in the morning,
they will come for us at night."*

*Maggie Nelson, The Argonauts

Khiasthira while Eating Almonds

most of all I like to be still
more than a few seconds I can hear my watch
a lunar cycle finds cadence in my pulse

mostly I am my best when I get here
snagging my tongue on an almond's salt crystal
licking the back of every tooth

mostly I have a calendar and a practice
today I pencil in to sense
my left thumbnail tucked in its bed

Spring day like steeping
in a hot bath, dim light deepening;

in the silver rain a green bicycle
with bent basket—mobile synecdoche

for lost trips into your sheets, quilts,
warm from the mist.

The Grey: If this is not the truth, it is also not a lie*

The cold beneath these floors hovers
like a fiberglass mist; frozen shards

bevel through the holes between stitches
in socks stolen from my mother's drawer.

Quake to the gumdrop capsules
saran wrapped around your chattering joints,

this may very well be
will be the worst thing you ever feel.

The season sets in like a hole torn in the air
from the bowels of a baretta,

evil sound I cannot make out from
my rickidy brick cube so precariously tacked

to this elastic sheen.
Far away from cops and dogs and dead boys

in a dirty lot filled with broken bottles,
far away from their problems, your problems (not mine),

January shoves a frozen purple finger through
the brass button on my jeans.

My tubes and guts squeeze together ready
for the ache of the next minute.

A million miles from home I'm home,
It's January and the air is all gone.

*Ben Lerner, Mean Free Path