

Brian Strang

the western end

at the root

of a tooth

or a tree

is another root

Where rivers reach the sea, the bus line also ends. Where the roads peel from the cliffs and the ground underfoot is gone. Cities built on landslides with a fissure overhead. Life continues. There are people looking into this.

In this state, you are caught between a speaking memory and knowing present, regenerative decay and declining indicators, walking straight through the simulation. In this state, you are between the lobby and the swimming pool, waiting for hours while they shout out mispronounced names. In this state, some streets are lined with fountains of flowers.

In this state, you are a faultline and a landslip; you may also be a refugee. In this state, the inconceivable eyes of a wasp counsel you under an inverted sea of mercury. People need to look into this.

uprooted

trees lie

implausibly

without reason

In the West, there are explainers with legacy timepieces. A self-inflicted solipsism for west of the West stands the East. The West is a simulacrum, a misnomer, a vanity. It is at a crossroads, minting its own mythology. At night, its dreams begin to fray and it congratulates itself with a thinkpiece. It holds forth for its followers: "Peace will come. Even here. Think peace." The followers walk away from the spectacle, back to their own campfires.

In the western isles, bells toll and citizens toil. Temporary work lasts forever and temporary housing becomes permanent. We are reassessing how we assess. We are unbecoming, without exception. There are people looking into this.

Under the freeways of the Wild West, many suns set themselves deep in their eye sockets.

the root

of a problem

is not a square

but unseen

In this state, the system is simple: rain doesn't fall from the sky. It is poured on those below with a bellow and a howl. In this state, they cling to a myth full of fissures and fall into seaside resorts.

A maw opens and some walk willingly in. No sound is heard. Nobody dares look into this. In this state, crops fail, skies burn and babies are born. A parade of cops, a preacher of pestilence, a paradise in miniature.

The western shore pitches into wildness. A drift of gulls, an exoskeleton without precedent appears on the sand, a cloud of dragonflies at dawn. An alien understanding from the deep, entwined fates and vines around the trunks. Trees skyward are unknown, unpredictable. The pretense of control is dropped. The cry of a hawk, warrens full of hares, luminous abundance in the cinders. People are looking straight into all of this.

if lands

“To live, we must die every instant. We must perish again and again in the storms that make life possible.”
— Thich Nhat Hanh

within one word

stars while outside

another wears away

one world erupts

Giving away, being born, counting the various ways this can be true. The world is still here, uncoiling like a fern.

In another world, exactly like this one, the land is for the people. In another still, it is for nobody. In another, the land is not land at all. Release me to the worlds that drip from themselves, tear themselves in two, filter through the surface into paradoxical efflorescences. Identical understandings diverge. Infinity is in the blinking flutter of wings, moths without mouths, skyscrapers every one. The body filters through the stems and leaves around him, grows as a mycelium network underfoot and becomes an octopus in a saffron moon.

if an octopus can be reflected in the sky

there must be a world of water

if spiders crawl on the sands of servitude

there must be a desert bloom of echoes

if a village is made of plums

there must be a pulse of breath

within every possible world

again and again

aging stops atop

a pine crying out

awash with wind

With the turn of the year is the amateur's ear, the begging cup and the overlords. With the passing of the eye, is the chorus of well-wishers and hotel owners. With the failing of wings, no person is invisible. Where some see ability, others see advantage, a network of bridges and suspensions. Where some see talent, others see a lack of imagination, the harried and harmless and few voices asking why. No person can be invisible. Pull away from the shore, my teeth have cracked and I'm tired of the carnival, the satellite images, passwords and protective coatings.

The land of equality is on the underside of the outskirts of town, where there are no banks or bars or ballrooms. A tailspin turns understanding to a drifting spore, even through the thickets of misdirection. Can this be truly wild and untamed?

float just about

above astonished

faces again over

whelmed

Still here, uncoiling like a fern. Still here unsung, the cracking of the earth, the drifting and complicated plateaus. The near misses, the happenstance and comedy dissolve into breath. Still here, an undulating mirror below the latency of stars. Still here, racing apart from itself, filled with rain showers and then the upward rain of evaporation, waiting for nothing.

if there can be messages in bottles and singing mailmen

most revolutions are lit from within, wondrous and danceable

if trees can gossip through lattices of the thickest air

wristwatches can unwind into clouds of bees

if hillsides can seethe with stockades of nettles

an iridescent bloom can fill the emptiest of skies

if any moment can unfold into quivering immensity

a pulse of breath is savagely wild