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Poems

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Michael J. Pagán

Fancy Limes at a Spangin House

He strikes me as
the type whom, even though
his slacks are belted
at his waist, would still feel
the need to carry on
with his hands gripping
the tops of each side
like suspenders, afraid
they may fall, still.

“They’ve conditioned us here,” he spoke up, finally,
“to be so afraid. But, there has to be a place where we
could go. We weren’t born here.”

“But, my power,” I responded, “extends only to the
walls.”

A drinking ration.

“You enjoy it here?” he asked.

“It’s quiet.”

“Then, that’s the difference between you and I. I don’t
swallow it--the quiet.”

“I know. It’s good for the morale, since there’s no
chance of escape. It’s because you don’t want to be a
part of what you’re hearing.”

Silence is a very large
breed and a brother of
a friend that lies only
in their briefs, a dirty-looking
brown, pushed further up
the thighs; sweat over
the body and thighs. And
at times, you can find it
walking the medians
of an intersection, in the
ground clouds, panhandling
with its ball cap, and its button-down,
and its slacks, with a sign
reading: *Homeless: that’s
not where I’m headed.*

“Have you lost weight?” I asked him. “No? Well,
then I guess you’re just tired, then.”

“Just tired,” he said.

But, there was sound:

And its rhetorical stance was
that sounds should be taken
seriously; its plots, its whirlings,
its marriage, its jealousies. . .

It’s a dodge.

*Sound: a breathtaking account of a life, death and
plague roped in sound.

It’s only human to dodge.

We can listen outside
the walls and its distractions
because sounds are supplements
that react rapidly, by a squeeze,
yet think autobiographically,
unsure of its breaks:

*Sound: a breathtaking account of a life, death and
plague roped in sound.*

CHAPTER ONE

How to dislodge Swoop.

I remember hearing. . .

CHAPTER TWO

Building a still to slow down time.

I wondered if there indeed existed another aesthetic that
they could’ve utilized. Was there another instrument they
could’ve taken up?

CHAPTER THREE

A plastic grocery bag blowing across an intersection

Come see about me, I thought to myself.

CHAPTER FOUR

I am (underlined) a man.

I wanted you by dreams.

CHAPTER FIVE
Two separate rooms

Like meat by the case.

EPILOGUE
Let-up

I ended by adding a window sill to slow down time.

...

A bucket in the middle
of the room, teasing them;
collecting only sound.

“I used to drive outside; one of those trucks with the
directional signs.”

I could hear knocks looking
for hollows. Hands being drug
across a chain-linked fence.
I could hear.

With its things lying about.

Much like a kite.

*The Biographical Fallacies Found in
Migration's Anxious Knuckles*

She didn't want to be recognized,
incredible chaos of the brain. But,
to stick close and tell funny and
laugh soon enough.

Because it *was* simple: a single, tidy
pulse; an overawed and casual yawning
walk—or a chair—warm with irritation.

*I used to collect loudness, she'd say, like
the road to success singing from the
big chair if—and only if—at least you'd
replace me with another,
one-hundred times more difficult.*

“I met him on a bench that, for some constructive
reason, sat facing a signboard reading: *Electrical Room:
No More Allowable Room Except For Electricities.*”

Because sound is premeditated: a human
voice in certain atmospheric
conditions. And the effect of this
climate on the soul is nothing
to be taken way; the famished
and the unthinkable.

The overcast light she'd have:

impossible to hollow out below
the surface of the dirt and not come
up with a body, dead.

At the bottom of my wash basin.

The consequences of this light
is the body: down to its crutches.
And you'd expect there'd be other
people—except the dead.

But, she was partial to the apt
wobble and waited. *I'm waiting,*
she'd say, *for someone to reach
down and pull you up in bunches.*
And, these slender buildings, too.

Because the word, *weight*, had
a good fist for reflection and heaviness.
Yet, she didn't happen to read gravity's
ingredient statement or product handling
guideline or allergy information but
couldn't help herself but to assume
Waffle having its place in it. At least
one hundred in just two hands.

And you just want to let her know, tell her: child, it is only
time. It *will* just go by. But, be here now; charming as a wall
outlet.

She asked him: “what if I were a streetlight?”

“On top of all this?” he asked.

“I'd place a plastic, black bag over my head and swallow
my own syrupy dullness like a lozenge.”

“But, I'm no guru,” he said. “I'm from Little Havana. I
just lay tile and marble and *that's* what I do.”

But, she's played the stammerer
before. You don't hide it
in a bottom drawer somewhere. And
it was never the physicality of the thing.
It's someone trying to clean breast.

He sat only in order to collect
new influences, and he said to me:
*once you have a start, the rest is
inevitable.*

He said: *the real problem is
that no one can spell around here.*

Spell what? I asked him.
reed, he answered.

But he didn't know much more about

hankering than your average Labrador Retriever. He had a heavy, medium robust movement that refined the weight of jangly; a pumpable charm if you would kiss him, much like a swing set at a cemetery or handwritten note reading: *I'm sorry, gone to hanging.*

That was just fine. *Just like a cat*, she told me. *Because cats don't belong to anybody--they just room with them.*

And he wondered then:
if she indeed was interested in hallucinations.

"I have to ask," she said. "I have to ask the doctor to check my wrist."

"The bone," he said.

"The bone," she said. "It's protruding out. Before, it used to just be indented. But now, *now* there's a bulge."

They were far too irrational.
But we are nothing wrong.