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More Poems

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Seeing Things

I saw a bug
crawling

but it wasn't
a bug

and it wasn't
crawling

it wasn't doing
anything

it wasn't even
there

(and I didn't
see it)

where
am I?...

these joyously shouting

these joyously shouting,
why is shouting? it is Aaah!

the joyously are our Aaah!
why our shouting, tremendous!
Aaah!

joyously it are above our

why are guys shouting above?
shouting, Aaah! why Aaah!

it above joyously is joyously
Aaah! shouting, are joyously

shouting, directly Aaah!
these shouting, shouting, Aaah!

are
are
above

(Words excerpted from: Krulwich, Robert. "Five Men Agree To Stand Directly Under An Exploding Nuclear Bomb." *Krulwich Wonders* NPR.org 17 July 2012. Web.)

—Wayne Daniel, *El Paso, Texas*

Unlocked

Never locks the doors to her home
This time she's at her dentist and says
I'll be late, just go in and wait for me
I arrive, landscapers everywhere and I take

My keys and pretend to jiggle access
Unlocked...explains how she greets me in bed
With ease, no need for candles, wine, soft jazz
Only her T-shirt top and it's both warm and cozy

She glides my excitement into her with
A smile—confidence without arrogance
It says here guy let me help you a bit
And then whispers *Yes, that's good*

Holds tight and belies her tiny frame
Moves with me almost silent
Until our cries...calls to God
She jokes *My neighbors will ask who's killing who*

After, unbidden she says
I have nightmares, lots of them
 What about? I ask
She can't say

—*Greg Moglia, Huntington, New York*

A TALL ONE

*Years ago, McSorley's Old Ale House
in New York City refused to serve women.*

I, too,
wasted my time
In McSorley's
smokey Old Ale House
with no women
but once
sneaked a tall one
in wearing
a slouch hat
with her hair
stuffed under
in time to find
a combat zone
where a famous
British act-
OR had been
snug in steamy
old McSorley's

but, tables turned,
the bartender
in a sweat drawing
a round—
“Trevor was here
and had a fit”—
my tall friend
giggling like
a little girl
(he gave her
a doubtful look,
but served her
a Stout). My
elbow in her
slim ribs—
her new deep
voice, “Thanks!
and cheers!”

GOODBYE MISTER BOP

When Chips left the Old School he wore its tie
and was carried out with his Wellingtons on.
But no way Mister Bop, the Burnt-Out Prof.
Things definitely aint what they used to be.
Bop gets to retire on something like a 401(k);
but not yet, as St. Augustine put it, not quite yet;
I'm not ready for retired sainthood yet!
The syllogisms from which Arustotle deduced the valid
are not complete. In American institutions
we fail upward to glory, and I expect
to be the mad head of the English Department before
I wallop my last tennis ball to cardiac arrest,
or do my last imitation of Johnny Weissmuller.
“Thanotopsis” is *not* my favorite poem.

LUNACY

I
can't
wait for
two more
weeks if I
take it now
if I ate it now
I'd have got only
the half of it but
half is better than
nothing & I need my
fix of the moon. I
open the window &
reach for the moon-
pill & pull it down
& push it in & chew
the moist cheese of
it in the green cheese
of it & begin to
feel the effect
of the dog's moon
the wolf's moon
& chew & swallow
& swallow &
chew grinding
& swallow
& finally
HOWL
!

TRACERS

Young, dreamy,
on a hill
dark as a
frown,
I fired
a fifty
-caliber
machine-gun
into the
night's abyss.
Every fifth
round
was a tracer
that flared
with a
wonderful
will as
it sought the dark ground.

What was
the magic
that night
that I could
never forget
how angelic
the tracers
looked,
losing their
light
without
whatever
regret
must be

humanly
brooked
when the
flare of
life flames
down and
into the
ground?

—*E. M. Schorb, Mooresville, NC*

muzzle 14.

it
hit
flit
limit
bandit
circuit
decrepit
maladroit
its
item
itchy
italic
iterate
itemized
itinerary

no one moved
from the wall
for each member was
between italicized letters
no one blew a kiss
as the purple stamp
of dusk mixed with flesh

SPINETHOSTALE

how	a	in
many	bard	vastness
pebbles	as	of
did	if	spring
plato	bird	tulips
take	sings	&
from	into	chimneys
the	the	jimmy
mouth	greenness	a
of	of	frosty
socrates?	spring	smoke.

—Guy Beining, *Great Barrington, MA*

Edward Hopper: *Methodist Church, Provincetown, 1930*

Wow: Roofs and gables and chimneys and porticos
Galore! And a bell town with a spire on top.
This isn't like the First Asbury Methodist Church
That my father drove my grandfather to each Sunday.
There's a gaiety to the white paint and sky above.
I wonder who designed it—a latter day disciple
Of Hawksmoor? I wonder if the pediment is a pentagram.
Hell, the Provincetown Players had already produced O'Neill.
Maybe the devil was already at play, as he had been in
Salem and among the Maypoles of Connecticut.
Here's the steeple, but where are the people?
Out in the sun? At the seashore, sailing their small craft?

And why in the world is Edward Hopper so happy?

Edward Hopper: *Lighthouse Hill*, 1927

Long shadows and lazy sunlight
Mark the ridges of the hill.
The lighthouse is half-and-half,
But it is the darker side we see.

Americans are a pragmatic people who build
What is useful and necessary, and what we build
Symbolizes what we cannot utter. And function
Begets form, and in the long run is often recognized
As beautiful. Then we say, "They don't build 'em
Like they used to anymore."

But they do, because they builders are artists
Who just can't help themselves.

A lonely profession, but suffused with
The beauty that has flowed
From the instincts of anonymous visionaries.

Edward Hopper: *The Dory*, 1929

What's this? Has he regressed to
Fauvism here? With Cubism a
Kissing Cousin? Better than to replicate
Ol' Winslow Homer. Let him remain
The godfather of the Nor'eastern fisherman
And not the dictator. The cubes are in the blacks
And logs and rocks of shore. The monochloric
Fauve is in the whitening of the temporarily
Tamed sail and sea. Hopper is the artist at
The till, the leverages rudder, guiding
American art between the idyll and the thunderclap,
Taking us from Irving, Poe, Hawthorne, Melville,

Emerson, Thoreau, and Twain across the bridge of
Whitman to the one of Crane—both Cranes—out
Of the backyard of Dickinson, the Europe of James,
And back to the grit and the grid of Dreiser and
Faulkner and, finally, the culmination of Hemingway:
The International American of the American Century.

Lonely at last was Hopper on the ocean of his dory.
Lonely were the Brave!

Edward Hopper: *New York Pavements*, 1924-25

This seems less, to me, about the pavements—
Which are seldom crowded—
Than the heaviness of the broad building,
The simple massive stoniness of it,
Like an ancient temple or walled city,
The pediments and pillars of the porch,
The contrasting horizontals of the rock,
The Egyptian sunburst of the carvings,
The dull yellow of the half-drawn blinds,
The pre-Christian immanence of man's constructions.

A nun or nurse or both,
In Marxist blue and white,
Her headdress blown back by the strong gust,
Against which she struggles,
Pushes a black baby carriage—
We see only the white sheet and pink blanket—
Child care so often given over to the childless.
This is not the summertime of our contentment;
It is the storm before the lull.
It is a time to go inside and stay there.
To take the children with you.

Keep the fires burning for as long as the fuel lasts.

The Twenties are just beginning
To envisage the penance of the Thirties.

Edward Hopper: *Hotel Lobby*, 1943

The older couple is dressed to the hilt,
He in three-piece suit and tie,
Perfectly tailored, with an overcoat
Draped over his arm,
His moustache and remaining hair
A dignified white, and she,
Looking up from her chair,
His age or only slightly younger,
Warm in black over red,
A literal feather in her cap.
They are probably waiting for their ride
To dinner or the theatre. Neither cares
To glance in the direction of the younger woman
Reading in a chair across from them,
Her light-blue dress cut above the knee,
Her black athletic legs crossed like a man's,
Her black hair and red cheeks
The picture of summertime,
Although with a hint of aging
To her feet and hands.
The older woman is trim, with defined breasts:
She has not thrown in the towel.
The younger woman is alone, maybe waiting
For her man, or maybe he's away at war.
Maybe the older man could afford her,
But would his circle of friends accept her,
Could he bring himself to speak to her?

Is he more comfortable acting his age?
She will be the older woman soon enough.
On the reception desk, wax melts, a flower wilts.
The younger woman wears high heels;
The older's are as flat as slippers.
The picture on the wall could be of either
The Alps or Rockies: snow-capped peaks
And frozen streams. The younger woman
Should put down whatever she is reading
And make much of time. December has its
Consolations, but which of us is apt to
Look forward to them with desire.

—Gerald Locklin, Long Beach, CA

The Name I Came to Answer To

Never, in all the elaborate procession
I've come to call my life
Do I remember anything
Even remotely resembling
A beginning.
I simply became aware
At some point
Of where I was, these eyes,
This voice, the name I came
To answer for.
There's no reason I couldn't
Have been aware
Of being someone else,
Many other somewhens
Before

—Max West, Sacramento, California

Flirt

The flower is the part that
saves. Spare me the
stamen I want

vibrato, scent, the elevation of
pleasure the buzz of
colored lights I want
customer service and
orioles.

How do we know what a
waste of time a
waste of time is?

(Your voice has worn a
groove in my skin.)

A peal of laughter from the
big-boned girl in blue,
eyeshadow, mascara, those teeth!
A trail of petals across the
tiles a song.

—*Michael Vaughn, San Jose, California*