

Joseph Harrington

The Word Thing

I feel nostalgic for myself,
my human tissue + little data set
hunkered in a cozy korner, maybe,

no longer rich enough to live:
life on earth suddenly disappoints
w/its funny fungibility –

I become o point between
the stuff and the us. But
you're the figure from the dream

where the natural persons live,
biomass burbling up and out
to fill the space that's left

*

My body is ruled by friendly forces
beyond its immediate control,

is expert at consuming things,
will eat whatever it must to live.

(Animals are too complicated, with
their complications unavailable to us.)

To unlock successive layers of growth
power-edger sounds a human wail,

so I hereby declare the Green World
the real world. Meanwhile,

the stuffed bird looks deader
than a conjugation table;

the live bird makes the syntax
want to fly away

*

the girl, object
of the crèche, the over-
whelming white
space: it's a craft
in a balloon, an effort
to get skyward, to send
the boy up and make
the girl go down

the flat floating
nothing of the page
is male or female &
nor mommy nor
daddy can tell you
why, so choose one
& then decide.

*

We got away from earth, down-
scaled to a smaller planetoid, but now

it's "gone dark" as well; we're awaiting
the snakes at the playground, but we

doubt they'll show up. Like a flight to
quality, like an escape into my own

ambivalence or height: what could
entail me at this point, slither back

collapsing unto itself, a play-doh
black hole prepared to make change

*

So, they removed the old trees
to make way for the new trees,
widened sidewalks so banners
would have more room to flap.

Drilling a little chickadee
digging a painful sun
owning we're all part
plastic now. How now

to stop seeing folks in mine
tunnels above ground?
Vista like a painted scrim
always shows up variable:

it's on us, or on our little screens.
I refuse to rhyme with screams.
I will see no connection, I
will perceive a future still I will.

*

Dear Future, you
know so much more
than we do & you
have forgotten it all

*

bombs sound like thunder
tornadoes feel like trains
I know a little capping
chromosome wraps under

who grows machines
out of mental flypaper;
d.n.a. for shoelace holds
the places you've seen

to tumble underwater,
fiscally or aqueously bats
the squamous toeholds
erode noticeably shorter

for corn portfolios infest
our key seed geographies,
new genetic platforms you
frenetically flee to invest in

Protein the Elder, wise old
protean lipitaur, whose oxy-
continental dreamliners
make a stint in the night

*

names ghost out and strike
selvic, word for a thing not invented,
through sticky lemony leaves

I see students madly dropping under
shadowy sub-bodies pipette-punctured
blood-drop leaves

what you thought of as your life ended
we still believe a picture on a beach
some leaves green

“they are so dumb the dumbest of bugs”
green animals fake the blue part
leave the seen

*

The screen of old growth
either side of the highway
can't conceal the sunny stumps.
Plant a tree: you won't see it
grow up or grow old.

For now, a school of saplings,
razor-straight rows:
you can stare up the aisle,
see something or someone
down there, backing away
between the little trunks.

*

Another earth day,
another dollar. Owls
a mile away throw sound
when leaf blowers briefly
cease, like they know
some thing back flows

This robin nirvana unfolds
under arranged pointy
branches unhinged among
the reflexive giggling
celebrating equipoise,
time after very thin green
house April, trap May's
sticky fingers in the soil,
reach only other fingers
per all a hand planet,

a name in the floating chill
to string green bird-lore by.
Earth's demeter dumpster:
world of the keening blue
we make of her
show time

*

the fact that birds continue to exist
the fact that they descend from dinosaurs
the fact that they descend from trees
these are a few of my favorite things

the fact that leaf-mold continues to sediment
the fact that we sink into it each day
the universe expands so that beauty
these are a few things

the fact of the word passerine
the way we act like our moon is special
the fact the sun moves while we do
a few things so radical are being

the fact that nothing terrible happened
the fact that it happened elsewhere
a few friends' factitious gardens
grow what they planted

the way the words can carry you
the mind i mean carries
the need for the word thing

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