

Rich Murphy

Torch Song

During the 70th Summer Limbic Games
as the global biohazard baited breaths
and a heated climax catastrophe
in banks rolled into the coliseums everywhere,
the frog gives up on the balance beam
to seek refuge in the lily pad floor routine
at the cranium stadium: Leaping lizard!

Showing off limber limbs at the septal parallel bars
the practice prince turns into a fog.
A bronze insult meddles and teases in Greek.

The neo-cortex coach, saddened by performances,
takes heart with the misty brow furrow feeling
while tearing up the old records, broken but in play.

Not counting on the team captain to analyze
and strategize, the prefrontal champ and amygdala
pitch in shot put balls and jab with javelins
in a muddled huddle puddle for physical companionship.

The squad carries on shoulders as habit,
as one – done and won –
a cognitive memorial precision procession:
A proud gold chest out at the closing ceremonies,
another Agamemnon rower wits the west home.

Force Majeure

The knowledge body for extreme existentialism
surveils to record a vault without a cape
over tall tales, short stories, trash diction.

The Olympics for honesty shakedown
the unaware who discover personal guilt.

A self-denying spirit laughs at the tongue
that wags so that the slow energies called
trees and deer welcome the appearance.

Behavior defies at any moment the daily
floor routine and balance beaming in the eye.

Beyond the Freudian slip, the witness show
with credits for good readers remembers
that up or down, east or west doesn't exist.

The third planet from a sun snakes the habit,
rite, tradition, convention labyrinth to tattle
on a mythmaker with a deflated hero who once
again runs with frightened species members.

Dopamine Tribute

The drive kicks in before a foot
anticipates the can in the road,
A rattle from a procrastinator
in the neighborhood multiplies
into a city-wide rabble racket.

Habit jumpstarts for the cycle
that without a helmet brrrms
English through urban-American
goggles along the border between
the 20th and 21st Centuries,
a last saddling before wind power.

The vehicle that carts via two legs
turns from Main Street at a fork
to save two ears and heads
to an unstomped stomping ground,
Language for Tomorrow, Maybe.

(That word again that fuels,
filling a hope tank without doubt.)

A reader or two hike up readiness
for whatever marching orders arrive.
The rider also with feet blazing
a j-walking short-cut over plazas
and through postage stamp backyards
dances to pause, without an epilogue.

Thought Balloons

The intellectual no-fly zone
over war propaganda swats
at questioners and nay-sayers
with dead civilian images
on national television,
silencing debate among
the gut-wrenched viewers.

Invisible strong stomachs with heads
drone on about the hawk
atmosphere clouding thought
from sea to shining sea.

Without perspectives,
balance for deliberation tips over.

Meanwhile, King Kong media moguls
atop the Empire State Building
smear on a zeitgeist windshield
blind spots for the century-long
single-minded destination momentum.

Old habits call up knee jerks
and memory thugs to push arm sales
for foreign soldiers who fall in stead.

Highwire Writing

Writing without a net
in the twilight between
consciousness and unconsciousness,

a balance pole (or umbrella),
resin, and tightline shoes
tool for toiling in flight
from likely to the possible.

Each foot steps so that toes
wrap around intimation stretches
not tipping to one side or the other:
Quaking into waking or into deep slssp.

Understanding an airliner requires
that pedestrians look up with attention.

From dream world to day-to-day
task lists and improv home improvements
syncopation could well double
for a string instrument.

The shear pluck plays at melody
that resonates with dare devils
who share and join in at the chorus.

Even the last syllable resting
disappointed on the destination
platform holds onto breaths below.