

John Cuttito

**“John Cuttito”**

The last memory I have  
Of him is building  
a fence together.  
He would soon be dead,  
In a way I suppose  
it's appropriate.

He was always teaching  
Me about fences.  
Or divisions.  
Niggers, Jews, everyone  
else and us.

But, when I was a child  
Sitting alone reading  
For countless nights  
none of the people in  
the stories I read ever  
had color. Or did the things  
He claimed they did. I thought  
to myself why does he put these  
fences up everywhere?

At the time I could not understand  
Why they were so different or why  
He was so angry with his life.

I saw a picture of him once  
Riding a horse with his brothers there was a vast wilderness behind him He had sandy colored hair and the most massive grin sitting square on his normally taciturn jaw as the wind blew about the brush.

I still think now I would have given anything to know that guy.  
The happy one.

The one who still talked to his brothers.

The one that did not have a barren wife who blamed ghosts and Jesus and bought holy relics from shopping channels and water from Lourdes which she later hoped would cure her.

Did not have stillborn children with names that were never known except on single sad sheets of declaration like an exported fruit cut from the vine and left to rot.

Did not have adopted sons whom were living at home at 40 or who were dead of depression and diabetes.

I would have shared stories with the man who had not battled cancer for 20 years living inside a snide body that constantly betrayed him.

Living with a wife who was always shopping or on the verge of leaving. who on good days threw tea pots and on bad days brandished knives and admonitions.

Would I have liked that man the one who did not have three inherited grandchildren from that dead son and deadbeat daughter in-law. Probably not. But I would have tried.

Instead I knew the man who built fences. Hastily erected fences, ones that kept him in almost as well as it kept others out. The man I knew did not ride horses. The man I knew when I was a child I shook hands with before I went to sleep.

He did not smile with wild abandon and hope. He did not tell me he had dreams and aspirations once. He did not say I will give you my legacy and you will take my name and do something powerful and moving. Something that will be remembered.

He merely said "go to bed". As if there were nothing left inside of him. But if I were him I would have built fences too.

What if I am him? What if we will all become him?

## Re-cog-nition

He was always just a cognate

Working in the factory each day when the whistle blew he put down his cog and ate and thought about being the other

That mind within the mind

Where the stone man sits in the eye of every storm

The wind beats in A minor syncopations he rolls the twist of genius between his long thin fingers and takes in the world with subtle contemplation and swallows each drag

The poet in him thinks I have been at the harbor how could I have missed the point missed the boat I hope I can float I hope someone will read what I wrote I hope I can read what I write some day

Can you pinpoint the pinprick to say what is art and where does it hurt it is somewhere in the truth it is somewhere we have not gotten

I have forgotten more than you have taught found more than you have sought

Create a new language, a new form of being

poet aren't you sick of it

Exposed to the quick of it

a systemic sycophantic cesspool of sestina sonnets

languishing in the most tortured

of ways

what have you done to words tramped

and trampled into uniformity and made  
to be sleeping Sleeping words  
easing just into the undertow

Don't you know when you destroy words you are ruining the world

An adversary only assumes perfection but when language is dead, its tongue expanding to fill its mouth and making  
no sounds they place him in the corner where no one can see and then they place a sheet over his frame

Who is to blame

Who is to place

As name is to forgot

As they have forgotten

That the only power is in names

And when they leave what is left?

Occasionally a real glimpse is permitted

He does not like any of you and has told you such and yet you are so consistent in your invitations and persistent he  
is not afraid he will go on for too long for what is too long what is long what is too what is too long is this it?

## **Oh Pangea**

We lived together once  
And died together too  
They found our fossils  
In an old box when  
A new family moved in

Like a continent shifting  
You are a brand new polar  
Ice cap  
Like something left behind  
We are all trying to forget what  
Made us so

Was it love that shifted Pangea  
Do you catch my continental drift  
Don't be so swift to shift into such a Great Divide

What is a year when we have so many to give  
And what then is a hundred, a thousand  
But would we count the sands in each place  
And wonder upon the dust of stars  
Upon our fates

The land behind, it dissipates  
The dirt in soles put upon our plates  
Oh Pangea if you wish to be one again you must eat that dirt of words  
That way it feels to have won though you have won no one at all

What was it then  
Will we call and apologize  
to the future  
Or leave a trail behind  
To live upon this land,  
Sometimes you must stand to be blind and deaf or mute as well

Because the things that they say  
Are the things you'd never tell  
You knew so well the mountains that grew hard and dangerous on each side  
Because after you split Pangea,  
What else was there to do but hide

I guess if you looked at the things that've kept you from being whole  
You would see it was pride which took the greatest toll  
And though we can see from side to side now it seems we'll never meet between  
how does dirt become clean?