

Richard Owens

## NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS

HYPERTROPHIC. What solidarity was polite until  
it was not—when we carried one another  
on our backs until we did not but worked a case  
more qualified social workers should have.  
Something snapped—the children were never  
taken into protective custody—our reuptake inhibitors  
blocked transport but altered no chronic mood  
what left us murderous under the stairs pawing for.

Marx is a reuptake inhibitor  
but—fuck—there's an app that threw me off my meds  
and it presents itself as a Siqueiros mural but looks more  
like that 2010 BMW Motorsports car designed  
by Jeff Koons. After 53 laps the car was retired forever.  
Elvis is a reuptake inhibitor. Before the Beatles  
ran off to India to meditate with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi  
Elvis travelled to Paris to perfect his roundhouse  
with Tetsuji Murakami. The sound of a lark. He shook  
hands with Nixon—what any honest man would do  
in the interest of total transparency when the pretense  
of an affinity for something different functioned to place us  
further in harm's way. Fallujah means nothing  
apart from renewed interest in calf-grazing skirts floral  
patterns and other spring fashions that encourage forgetting.

Pol Pot diluted our Mao. We fell  
for the police who were only working people

to begin with—that job in corrections because it offered  
benefits or what else was there given the choice  
—this spring frenzy when pressing decisions yield to  
the irrepressible logic of common sense solutions.  
Utopia promises career opportunities. This is a good year  
for merger activity—look at the League Tables:  
kiosks and pretzel carts have little to no overhead at all  
and I can't blame you for surreptitiously adding  
a used four-door sedan to your grocery list—children  
need to eat—priorities being what they are as  
they are—this parable of just another idiot in the village.

Spring into action before interests  
wane and fashion shifts toward something more agreeable.  
Foxglove petals are toxic—a deeper music—Virgil  
Thomson the mother of us all and all her saints  
and an inextinguishable allegiance in me dies repeatedly  
to love so true the State Fair for which they stand  
apart from ambitions extraordinary in their puny desire  
—an implacable overreaching congruent with  
the irrepressible logic of common sense solutions.  
I felt the bill of your baseball cap on the side of my neck  
before you smashed that Mason jar against my face  
for want of a viable common sense solution  
and then we agreed—scars are marks of distinction  
and you helped me wipe away the blood  
and cuts don't heal as quickly as when you're a kid  
—the advantage of spring—cherry blossoms  
which ain't toxic but never last so long as less attractive  
phenomena—wipe the blood away—what a cliché  
the staying power of this wildly overexpressed collagen.

Blossoms are a reuptake inhibitor  
but—fuck—stay focused. Don't let them distract us  
more than they motivate us to not sleep  
any longer than we need to since it leads us to believe  
we been out cold like winter or the Cold War  
which is over—and where are all the great  
communist leaders—there are no communist leaders

and the buds signal a vacuum like the Volkswagen plant  
in Chattanooga where pools of Confederate blood  
gather in the garden to alert us to the number  
of UNICEF workers that go missing in Knoxville  
not Karachi. Senator Bob Corker of Tennessee  
blames the UAW for the derelict state of Detroit and  
in lieu of an assault rifle what ancient rite can  
so giddily obliterate such puerile logics like a maypole.