

# BlazeVOX 11

Spring 2011

Dan Owen

*And wordless, he comes to sleep*

A forgetting. A wash of brackish  
water. The deeds of one's youth, pennies in one's pocket  
could come out in the wash. Could be made a wish.  
Shopping malls tower above this example.  
Remember each particle of gravel, your feet tread  
the white line 'tween here and the calendar, a pebble of sand  
worms into your shoe. Raw carrion on hooks. To market,  
a conference of motors, a goat bleat din. Tomorrow's pizza party  
hangs on the edge of a discus. Thus and thusly. Any glass  
could be used as a lens, any wall could prop a clock.  
Sound and sense linger long after the other guests have left.  
Stoic faces, the pop and flash of a camera before  
our time. Cross another item off the list.  
Those high cheek bones, that posture, so becoming of a diary  
entry. So little separates us from the frames of ourselves.  
A pause going into the last deep tone.

Borders Crossed

noon roves from horizon to horizon    slapdash  
as homeless feelings leave handprint  
smudges on the windowpane that  
reappear perpetually when condensation  
wets the glass    a recurrence of weather  
that turns and shimmies like a dance that  
comes in and out of style over the ages  
and the tire's rubber that once made circles  
in the ocean turns and shimmies under  
its tonnage of Honduran bananas

Meanwhile    the minute hand runs  
its laps hungering its own tail    The project  
of forgetting becomes more and more  
dire as each moment rears and collapses  
on itself    frothing sea mist that    prism-like  
is a lens in which colors bend    recalled  
conversations reconstitute themselves in novel  
timbres    whole vistas take on different hues as  
if playing dress up before a mirror

The sea    never having regarded itself  
as metaphor    becomes cold and distant as  
you frame it    so it goes    There  
a school of clocks crest the tide  
like boogie boards    with each further  
imitation fidelity to the master copy  
weakens and all we have to work and play  
with is semblance miming semblance  
approximate feelings in the tide pool among  
molluscs you can collect when they beach  
and dry and rattle in your pocket walking  
the tight rope from here to home

Remember the painter who unravelled  
his whole life inland painting portraits of the sea  
he is a mirror fogged by warm breath    like this  
we deny    disguise artifice    changing the lyrics  
to match what we hear of the song

Golden Lucky Cat

The new year comes and goes littering the streets  
with confetti. We barely understand, the primacy  
of the color red, the nature of the project shiny.  
It's all veneer, inherently a glimmer. So close  
to death and even closer to the denial  
of death. As the mud-splattered urchin sticks  
his tongue out, hurling hand-crafted mudcakes into the empty  
outside where the misread ocean forms shapes—curlicues  
and arabesques, gewgaws and flash—consequently  
shaping forms just out of sight like the spider's web  
spangling its diamond patterns above the doorway.  
As you walk the pavement, accidents barely averted  
multiply until you find you are walking a narrow path  
through sopping overgrowth. It is dark. Nowhere to go but onward.  
No map but the memory of spring flowers, the wasp stings  
and improvised dances of childhood. Traveller, may you be blessed  
with heaping sacks of gold coin and a friendly destiny.  
In another life, who knows, you could have been  
a census taker in Death Valley or a bank teller  
in the long autumn of empire's decline.

Ah, Golden Lucky Cat,  
may this year be as sweet as the sugared coconut  
shavings spilt on the bakery floor. May bridges trundle  
between islands like non-committal handshakes on  
a commuter train. A smooth bland homecoming  
is the most we can ask for our loved ones  
at sea. Golden Lucky Cat, light the way to  
prosperity with your dumb bared teeth.

Know All the Contemptible and the Mediocre

Or to pull your chair up to the set table, following  
the migratory patterns of ghosts, ringtone  
set to the music of contemplation, a 5-tone scale  
like the rungs of a ladder laid against the living room wall.

Trying to leave my body once, I stumbled on all the jagged  
names protruding from my flesh. Less than refined.

*It is clearly written, little brother. Study carefully  
the literary teaching of a good person long ago.*

*You must understand the reason of the contemptible, ultimately  
have no connection, understand the mediocre.*

There are many forms of grace, not excluding stumbling,  
using one's hands to eat, trying to use one's language  
as a wick. Still, it is stumbling. The ghosts  
fog the kitchen window.

Just think: all of the emotions in your pocket  
put together are lost in the shine  
of an old song. It is a form of indifference  
carrying the water of the ages on its shoulders.

Up the mountain, down the mountain. The metaphors  
pile up like unread mail until something collapses,  
the telephone rings,  
the empty pockets are tied into white knots,  
and wine stains the carpet.

The vague sensation of wanting something enters  
the porous space around the flesh, scaling.

*From Here to There*

Now he reads only yellow literature. The season  
for hot toddies has long passed, like a blimp trailing  
promises for a bounteous future. One day at a time.  
Locate yourself on the timeline using a complex system  
of algorithms. Throw the darts until your turn is over,  
snakeskin boots come back in style, frost crinkles white the grass.  
An inhospitable gaze is currently unexcused, which isn't to say  
inexcusable. It is mute. It smells like cinnamon gum  
right now. The night bird on Eckford Street comes back  
in the guise of a woman in a grey work shirt. Obviously,  
it's springtime. In a similar fashion, a subway car bears us  
from here to there like a day's box on a calendar come unglued. The want  
to handfeed the color yellow into the woman's eyes  
is a perfectly natural desire like thirst. Someone take  
all this agency from me, I'll just squander  
it. While away the summer. A waste of time  
burns on the lawn of the ages, while little squirrels  
pursuit each other up a tree.