

Michael Sikkema

SOLVING THE EARTHSHIP

Soon the moon. Strawberry, sturgeon, or harvest. Rivers
and tides. In cartoons, shit gets tilted, goes to hell, the moon looks leapable.
In a story, crow fetched
it in a sack, dropped it in the lake to drown
coyote. Waters rise.
Our dream house is a bunch of trees but
in a flow economy, the local forest is
so much product placement.
In real life, I'm fatter than the internet, I'm waxing,
my rope is at the end of me. I'm saying: soon the moon.
Solving the earthship requires an apple orchard in silver light.
You know, something classical.
Something new.

I noticed strangling syntax didn't
tear down the empire. I noticed you
have a pocket of songs fit for pedal steel.
Someone burnt down your whole century.
I guess they needed the light.

I first read Solving the Earthship when I needed it. Faraway
right here. There I was
waving goodbye to tiny oceans screaming about gun rights.
What I'm saying is:
the oaks dropped papery seed pods all around
the house as my
13 year old friend tried teaching
my 13 year old self about sex by fast
forwarding through the cunnilingus scenes.
That was now. The lake theater is marram-edged. The walk
easier this time because the boy
wants to carry. We follow the trails through
the dune valley, stop at the rib window of a doe. We
walk, set camp, eat, we sleep, wake to coyotes then crows.
Their bodies appear where their voices aren't.

First thing, a gnat bled
on the poem called Answering Machine. Sorry Lee Ann.
Their vortex is some bullshit if
your mouth is open. I had a friend so gentle. He wouldn't
swat bugs. I'm not food without a fight,
but the microcosmos makes liars of all of us and
people fuck in graveyards because
this game is all at once. This space was reserved for
the big issues, panning out just highlights
the cross currents. What powers the earthship;
the gulls laugh that
way in the waves' monologue all Ss and Sh; this is
as far as the current approach can get us.

The chemtrail bastards do go on. You can amp up that toxic
foreplay all you want, the biomarkers are
the same and people have
been animals for a while. The earthship then will
have to accommodate pregnancy, both its own
and that of its passengers. The walking today is tougher on
the dunes so people take the beach route, shoeless or not.
The ones with the shiniest
backpacks waste a lot of space. Overhead the satellites
click into place. Symbiogenesis.
Mitochondria and some mites gather round the poker table. On
the screen I imagine in my hand, Whitman (an ape) is
conducting a field (of dollar signs),
leaf-wand in hand, but we only perk up for the sexy bits.

The new garden at the new house is a stripe,
not a ship. Not even close. Which is why we're
here. Whoever's been sleeping in the back shed has
a whole story and I'm trying to
decide if I want to know it or not. I can
be a poor citizen. Some sweet monster snapped
off the tallest sunflower, or some
squirrel was throwing its voice. Either way,
we can't get off without getting on.

The stinging little fucks bit my tattoo.
This minor pain highlights
the body's largest
system. Beer still cold. Gold, yellow-gold,
gold-yellow, in the water is phase 1.
Somewhere someone is learning to grow
the earthship frame. Somewhere
someone is
calculating how to break orbit, how to enter
orbit, how to orbit. I'm counting
the clouds the sun's
passing, counting the smoke
trails of other people's campsites,
listening to the lake
defend itself. I'm doing my part.

There is enough countergarden
for a year in one winter. At least
this last one. Lately
I'm thinking of the version where
we all win but we have to forget names
and bodies. The lake and shore are
an earthship exchanging our insides.
The kids know $\frac{1}{4}$
of the lyrics to 5 songs and I
improvise the rest. They carve mazes
into sand. Overhead the gulls'
work is beauty
and death. Join the fucking club.

At the beginning, halfway in
on the trailside, the nest sort of throbbed.
We can't recognize the future. So much
fluff and buzz. The earthship will have
to breath on its own. To move
through space powered by space. Ant
colony. Gull Colony. Some herd of replicate.
The walls of the earthship kitchen will
be harvest-ready meat-fruit. This
is space. This is space here we are. I see
two people on a mile's worth of shoreline.
Soon the moon.

Michael Sikkema is the author of *Futuring*, and *January Found*, both from Blazevox Books), and of *May Apple Deep* (forthcoming from Trembling Pillow Press). Also the author of several chapbooks and collaborative chapbooks including *3003 Houses for Nikki Wallschlaeger* (forthcoming from Little Red Leaves Textile Series). Sikkema lives near a large body of water visible from space. He's currently working on a series of sci fi prose poems.

