

HEREAFTER

Leslie Bumstead

Dusie

2014

HEREAFTER

Leslie Bumstead

Demonkeep

national urges prey
on an era

inevitable vice
dispersing

traveled assembly
ambient sincerity

gathered geographic
armored germ

cascade of future
episodic swept away

landless vertebrate
demonkeep

in memory of Leonel Gómez Vides

Sinkhole

And still she said
the reparations are bare.

Here on the supine leader's jaw
or the hands of his human catalogue

a sinkhole appears.
The attendant can't sleep.

Field

A tremendous owl
worries the platoon

argues into minor
contraband & cluster

bomb & YouTube
videos of screaming

crowds to excite
their purchased

masters. You are its
name & income

bracket, chronic
remedial blue.

The crowds are adorable.
The violence is vintage.

The children re-arm & pull
the hearse.

After

Fractured house &
human site narrows

wandering.
The body

in muscle remembers.
The pitchfork rusts.

Sensory state
in which one can't

make decisions. How
do they arise in you?

Not one thing, smoke
billows from windows,

a future of thorn
& ration. No theme

but passage, stepping,
stuttering, desiring only

to return. Captivity,
or blazed wandering

narrative state
in possessed decline.

Battalion

To imagine it's real
but not yours,

as the real & the running off
stage are purchased

for communal enforcement.
Run, & come back with

trinkets & guns
numbered. It's not

your army by the brook
muddy, mad with hunger.

Who swears never to forget
but the currency remains

inscrutable, submerged by
hellfire, quartered at dawn.

Who takes her hands to pray,
soldier shifting the target.

A possible cease-
fire feels indistinct.

Bright grief,
incremental.

weapons. Inside them
Armageddons

reworked &
repriced; our duplicate

savior saying don't
finish the confession —

the conflict has
spirited your

progeny away
to a place

no one can
describe or defy.

Duplicate

harassed unknown
nervous

tents cast
along highways

ghosts in
gaps & blights

our arguing
cranial leper

never matching up
never living right

who felt
an unseen.

If you had
somewhere to go

a living
wage a community

of purpose unbroken
by opinion.

But here a suitcase
filled with imaginary

Mission

A mission kneels on its
apple bushel sound

You fill the cart
You can't slow down

Before raking hostility
Before traitors apply

with their hot hands
The fear is tremendous

but you hurry to it
for comfort.

Such humiliation begs
to be ideological stance.

Before tracking revenge
Before warbled abuse

you become torn in.
Holding a shoe lace &

a raccoon skin. The world
"out there" stumbling

over the crown. Crooning
to it. Not knowing

a free thought, but
grab the enshrined

throat, pulling out
varied communions

of cruelty.

Hereafter

The neurons wanted to fire
differently, but this is what

they got. Three image
pile-up on the off-ramp, blink

of ash & metal. This alien
planet with its curly life

forms, magnetic turnabouts—
where's central command?

A pilgrim as sign of
brevity. The mantra

says a million flamingos
bow & trip onto the quiet

fields of cities & survivors.
Corruptibility of the written

urged on, then quarantined,
brainstem & spectacle.

Burial

for L.

Cold comes
pursuit alights

the load & lock
taking its game

we can't slow
growth or map

incongruous levity
a grief that forms

islets with transparent
hands, that muscles

through stasis & calms
its own hurried nerves.

*How much do I
miss you*

kicked like an eye
in the sun

Domestic

Small gathering cloud
animals & mercenary troops

here to wake you. But you've
been awake, washing clothes

in the *pila*. You've been sensing
the domestic lull. It's a post-

apocalyptic dream, in which
everyone is equally domestic &

driven. Until someone decides
the leader doesn't have time to

clean up after himself. Begins
& ends, recorded history,

in which a person peddles
a collective swollen

trance. She'll stand
uncorrected. Not crossroads

but ungovernable scale
& carriage.

Foe

The rescue was overcrowded,
a steep-walled pursuit,

shadow drinking at the wrenched
inquiry— root or stub? smoke or ash?

human animal rehearses sand
plover, ocean opening, articulated

dunes. Lost by the secret
police as language acquisition

erased testimony, life stood accelerated,
particle & berm, fast rope, minutiae

or zero volume.
The team charged the wall

to save the diplomats. Foolish
Ambassador, eating Entenmann's donuts

& solving for x. Thus bathed
in evacuation procedure

becomes a future
of performance &

report, impervious to
those left behind.

Hermit

We have nothing
else, hot-wired voices in

your reed bed, blurry
ornaments of intention.

Crouching on the pitch &
the weather turns back,

washed out, can't fend
for itself. Hermit

on the fen. I can't hear
him when he talks.

There's no listening
place left for him.