

Monty Reid, from Host

Host – 6

Chagas

At night, the kissing bug climbs out of the wall
and kisses the salts and acids of your lips, of your eyelids

in the cool room you were sleeping in
in the vapours of reality you were sleeping in
in the mosquito nets.

Do you know how you got it, this idea of an inside, the vector
of an inside, how you have rubbed it into the opening

and you itch.

Imagine the contiguous things, which have no imagination
themselves and so are drawn to you

where the skin is thinnest and the imaginary has its surface
markers but no cure.

The kissing bug climbs out of the wall
out of the corners, out of the cracks in the plaster, the nail-hole
for the crucifix and the drilled holes for the tv

out of everything you imagined it was in
and kisses you until you know exactly where it is.

Host - 7

Interleukin

The messengers arrive.

They have no message. Until they have touched something.

Down the salvage pathways, the cascade that pours down
the extent of matter, down the tight wires, down the slick ruts.
down at the bottom of the darkness where you sleep.

Still, the messengers have no message, no voice
until they have found the receptors and even then, all they have
is a question

.....do you even know which part of you you are.....

No, of course not.

They have asked it before
and how pure would you have to be to know?

They are homesick for something purer
than you could be, where the macrophages
burn with their fury, in the oxygen gifted with tension, in the deep tissue
where the cell debris collects and ciliates ingest the starch grains.

Call them down.

They now have something to tell you.

Host – 8

It Means Dissolve

A story begins every time it enters.

Not in the tongue or the brain, a story never begins there, no matter how much we want to believe it, that it begins with us, our words.

Each segment, or proglottid, of the flatworm is more like an individual within a colony since each is a complete sexual unit.

These are the ceaseless divisions that make up the story of the soul, how it has been parsed and segmented,

so you can maintain the human illusion
so you can remain the host

and how each segment can generate the entire animal
with its flame cell and four-bulbed scolex

that dissolves the host flesh as it passes through
on its way to the testes, which it will also lyse

as it looks for something beautiful
or more beautiful, to remove.

Host - 9

Without Knowing It

In the little paradise, where the hostas and mosses
have their shady corner, and the snails slick ribbons of chlorophyll
from point A to point B, and their mantles pulsate

swollen and bright, because *Leuchochloridium* have entered
first the pancreas and then the tentacles
and want the robins.

They want to be taken up.
And the robins can't resist whatever needs them so relentlessly.
Always, paradise begins without knowing it.

Accessory suckers latch onto the gut-lining of all the philosophers
of paradise, those who claim that nothing can penetrate
the ring around the animal and sulk among their quiet hostas

even as the enzymes that dissolve host tissues do their work
and the endothelial linings become sticky

and without knowing it
in the little paradise, purple blooms, robins sing.

Host - 13

Host Space

Do you want to know how close you need to be?

Close enough so the radiant heat
and the carbon dioxide at concentrations as low as 0.16%
can activate the questing response of the larvae.

See them undulate.
It's what they do whenever you enter the host space.

This is where there is no room between the words
where there is no opportunity to wonder whether

you consented, or whether you are emptied, as all
the volumes of the heavens.

Where the cost of manipulating host behavior
can be shared among the guests.

There is no other space like it.
And no other space.

Host - 14

Recruitment-driven

Let's get this straight - there is no such thing as the other.
There is no such thing as a hole unless there is a membrane.
There is no such thing as Nature.

An embedded implication is that they will be
exposed to more parasites because they will encounter
a wider array of intermediate hosts.

There is no such thing as a body without organs.
There is no such thing as a partition of the sensible
if the sensible is merely language.

Where are you now?

Ah, you have come
with your entourage of worms
with your cloud of flukes and schistomes
with your array of bodies
with your outbreak of names.

And yet there is no such thing as you.

Host - 15

Recalcitrance

A tiny crustacean has eaten your tongue
so it could install itself where your tongue used to be.

It's visible to the naked eye should the eye ever get naked.

It's visible to
the recalcitrance of every body to unlikelihood.

It's visible to
the recalcitrance of the tongue to absolution.

The foreign power enters every inside.
It functions like a tongue.
It absorbs a percentage of whatever passes through.

Whatever you think of as you can't change this.

If you open your mouth nothing is
what it sounds like.

Host - 16

Face

Leishmania brasiliensis knows the truth and it lies.

When the sandfly bites it twitches past the skin
and enters the serum.

By this time, it has lost its tail, and what comes to destroy it
fails because it cannot be recognized.

It changes the activating surface.
It hides behind the apoptotic surface.

It used to be called Jericho buttons
and soldiers returning from the Middle East still report cases.

In extreme cases, it migrates to the head
and eats away the soft tissue until the victim is faceless.

Moral philosophers have a face. Emmanuel Levinas
has a face. Simone Weil has a face. John Stuart Mill
has a face. John Rawls has a face. If you have a face
Leishmania eats it. It eats recognition.

Nonetheless, you are a temporary environment.
and it will leave you the way it came, unable to be
a single thing.

It needs you but it prefers a dog.

Instructions to the Phage

They are lost – show them the way.

They are mistaken.

They have entered the shadow assuming it was something else.

They thought it was an object but it was only a thing.

Things are not objects, objects are just phantoms of a subject, just the think of it.

They have crept to a penetration site and transformed themselves.

They have released the serum that dissolves the tissue.

They have passed through the surface effect of the skin.

They have made a cloak of invisibility from the camouflage molecules snipped from your cells and distributed on the surfaces of the shadow.

And still, they are lost. Show them the way.

Let them move deeper through the heat flux of the material

through the catenated tissues, let them be the space you have come to think of as yours.

Just because you hear the voices does not mean they are meant for you.

Just because they have entered does not mean they have stopped trying to find you.

You can partition the sensible all you want and they will not stop.

You are never enough.

Finding you is never enough.

Let them enter the phage that has been sent to kill you.

Let them breach the security of the skin.

Let them enter the wilderness and stay there.

Monty Reid is an Ottawa writer. His most recent books are *The Luskville Reductions* (Brick) and the brand new *Garden* (Chaudiere Books). He has published chapbooks with a variety of small publishers, including above/ground, Gaspereau, corrupt, red ceilings, Apt 9 and others, and his work can also be seen in magazines such as *The Malahat Review*, *Ottawater*, *drain*, *experiment-o*, *Truck*, *Event* and elsewhere. His illustrated mistranslation of Nicolas Guillen's *El Gran Zoo* is forthcoming from BuschekBooks in 2015 and *Meditatio Placentae* is scheduled for 2016 from Brick. He is currently managing editor of *Arc Poetry Magazine*.