



2007 Tim Armentrout



*as the  
spirit  
waned  
the  
form  
appears.*

-Charles Bukowski, "art"

Breeze and guitar strings  
Fog still burning off of Rich Mountain  
Monday and your eyes  
Right in two  
Why has inspiration diminished to details?  
Bukowski said form is the absence of muse  
Or something like that  
It's so easy to remember Poison lyrics  
So difficult to quote good lines  
We are symptomatic regardless of effort  
Scarred in the wilderness  
Perpetually reaching for the village  
Vocabulary cluttered  
Postponing an end

Can't help but wonder  
How few people prior  
Have spent Tuesdays reading poetry  
In a booth  
On the bar side  
Of CJ Maggie's  
The bucket lampshades  
Juxtaposed dim  
Conversation of miners  
Finally taking recognition  
How many we've known  
How many we've toiled to know  
Red wine, dark beer  
Carving spirits out of ghosts

All this falling away  
Mist curls up, licks tree tops  
Doors open  
Doors close  
No one says a word  
Ceremonies of welcome  
Obscured by language  
The precipice of water  
Wednesday and your eyes  
How our names change  
Fingertips burst  
Ice blisters  
There is rain  
Reason for us to be silent

Roots spread over threshold  
The exit  
Can't see through  
Reflection on top of dark  
Where does one go  
After stepping out of Thursday?  
Blinding pastel lights  
The other side of the stage  
Never fretted on to begin with  
Creates an opening  
Where you might find me  
After your urge to finish my sentences  
Has passed  
And you decide which direction to walk.

Streets are busier than expected  
Sirens and engines whine  
Dogs curl on the bed  
Smoke seeps through the screen  
Dissipates  
Water sprays from tires  
Mucus drips a slow, steady pace  
Trouble breathing  
Like an elephant on your chest?  
Now that you mention it  
There's more metaphor than intended  
Friday and  
Memories  
Of leaving



Inexplicable  
Moss over eyes asleep  
Pale light pries  
Boarded windows  
Homeless souls  
In pursuit of vacant pupils  
Impatient sound effects  
Applauding hollow piano  
The symphony of video game heroism  
Our lives like junk  
Sick sliding  
Syringe to vein  
Ashes, dust  
Bloodletting

Exhaling smoke  
Quiet  
Wind wraps leaves  
Clouds darken  
How many gray details  
Before something better  
Comes along?  
Vampire eyes  
Unable to swear  
In swollen faces  
Spent glow sticks  
Represent nothing  
But dead  
Liquid and morning

It's made out of beads  
The body extended  
Transaction processing  
A perfect little drive  
Past fallen road  
Heavy lids capture mist  
Steadier rain than hands  
Shaved hillsides expose  
Black veins  
Varicose earth  
Asphalt band-aids  
Hide infected holes  
You cannot unsay a cruel word  
But you can really fuck somebody up

Gnaw it sharp  
Ineffective  
This consistent grind  
Blunting the edges  
To make language  
Mute  
Bodies convey messages  
Through sewn lips  
Ostracized and folded  
Displaying signals  
From pent up knees  
Even secrets  
Have a way  
Of surfacing

Absent faces  
Conjured faint memory  
Mists envelope valleys  
Ocean-sized  
Dreams of moisture  
Land locked  
Ignorant of language  
Blissful dismissing  
The ancient  
Supplanted by immediacy  
Resolution sought by conflict  
Wasted faculties  
Producing garbage  
From the gardens of human potential

Following faint paths  
Between dreams and sleep  
Confused eyes open  
Silhouettes of material  
Fabric stitching skin  
To elements awake  
Argument over  
Who tattooed the sky  
Caressed face  
Delicate veil  
Transparent nightmare  
This frail vision  
Among millions poised  
On the verge of sunrise

Friction makes fluid  
Invisible marks of aggression  
Color the silences red  
Fidgeting for an objective  
An exit  
Suitable in absence  
Of emergency's clarity  
Calculated breaths  
Cannot sustain chaos  
So it gets created  
Prevents a stoic summit  
Upon ascension's lesson  
That all mountains  
Slide constantly into valleys

A choice to remain strangers  
Constructing masks  
Enemy ideology maintained  
Over the static  
Communication comes on a wave  
Ignorant of water  
We insulate ourselves  
From ebb and flow  
Call moon "rock"  
And mountain "fuel"  
Neglect oceans  
To purify indoor pools  
In privatized neighborhoods  
Behind guarded steel gates



Cautious steps  
Through snow dust  
Early Monday  
Dark fades from mountaintops  
New day's nausea  
Disorienting sleep  
Walk slowly into graves  
Convinced of morning's  
Cruel signature  
Sunburst pain  
Explosion above the hips  
Dawn abandoned hope  
Gray  
Like milked excuses

A desire for stomachs  
Calm as Tuesday  
Cold breakfast in the snow  
Reinventing ritual  
With a hand shovel  
Sage and crystals  
Burial before earth freezes  
The preservation of life  
Does not guarantee its quality  
Laboratory rejection  
Is still a death sentence  
Fragmented  
By glory and illusion  
Rising with winter sun

Disastrous leadership  
Scanned crowds down lines  
Of pointed fingers  
The search for home  
Where blame can rest  
On thieves of Wednesday's innocence  
Responsibility minimized  
Sliding in and out of back doors  
Shadowed compassion  
History has been shaved  
Sounds of bone echo  
Memories of meat  
Refusal to admit  
Flesh is an opaque veil

Late eyes  
Lifted thick from frost  
Pre dawn doors frozen open  
Visions of breath  
Crystallized shift to higher gear  
Climbing red lines  
Into white hills  
Ground crunch beneath  
Boot heel  
Silent exodus  
Through Thursday's routine  
Ceremonies of movement  
Break like language  
Into cold air

Blindfolded formless dawn  
Without light  
Conversations break into divisions  
Sidelined dark intentions  
To howl in solitude  
Obliterate the sun  
Speeding through a thunderstorm  
In a cardboard box  
Symbolizing nothing  
The actions of dismemberment  
Rain falls on Friday  
A universe laments  
The sin of imagining purity  
When hands eliminate space

On Saturday  
Ravens in the rain  
Above bare trees  
Brown roads rut  
Harsh path across  
Forest's face  
Lacerate oxygen  
Shape space to sell storage  
Ignorant  
The burden of excess  
Four more steps  
Congested with eggs  
Speculate exits  
From these ill directions

Burn the clouds  
Tuesday's fresh approach  
To relight the core  
Center of warmth  
Strangers at elbow's reach  
Distances between breathing  
The shared heir of solitude  
Hollow crowns for the kings  
Royal affirmations drenched  
In the salt of the earth  
Barren lines of despotism  
In bed with lepers  
Shedding green layers  
Of infectious design

Open to this nightmare  
Shaky hands  
Struggle for syllables  
Avoiding the profane  
Language is a virus  
Sluggish, the acceptance of truth  
Dangled on a string  
Always out of reach  
Names of history  
This is a terrible poem  
We tell each other  
Blood and war  
The underground  
The metaphor



Sun warms vertebrate angles  
Distant scalpel echoes  
Silences ignored  
Primal lacerations  
Spilled liquids stain tables  
Ten more vertical documents  
Minute incisions in vital language  
Rhetorical oxygen tank insignia  
Sterilized tissue samples  
Green with envy  
Laboratory defecation  
The bulge between ribs  
Hatching scum from  
Unscrubbed sinks

Up in the trees  
Tails curled around branches  
Monkeys control ancient palaces  
Contemplating jazz  
Communicate through scat  
Exchange the simplicity of blankets  
For fire without knowledge  
And it all comes crumbling  
Civilization's quick ruin  
After human introduction  
Genetic divisions recognized  
Torches tied to tiger's tale  
Ashes and rain  
Shaped into secret lies

Not a chance in 87 hells  
This blistered hatred  
Between the job and the work  
Stagnant  
Showing traces of previous movement  
Wax hardened  
Moments prior to dripping  
Tuesday serves Monday's purpose  
First in a series of empty promises  
Uninvited voyeurs  
Documenting dreams  
Truth  
Lost in the desire for otherness  
Unattained in the absence of confidence

Monday's alternate reality  
Wrists swollen  
Neighbors veiled by shadow  
Mumbled recognitions  
Community functions in darkness  
Dancing underwater without getting wet  
Petty concerns  
Displaced rhythm  
An apology refused  
Diatribes of the self-righteous  
Incision's slow bleeding ignored  
All these nouns and actions  
Meanings strung out  
Like spent tantrums

Scents of spent oils  
Slide like dried blood  
Over open nostrils  
Scratches sore  
Scabbed hands hide signs  
Open and closed  
Communication barricaded  
While we make ourselves victims  
The cats patrol the perimeters  
Drama continues  
How to exhaust this pattern  
Where shrieking maintains control  
Tones echo malicious intent  
And there's death beneath fingernails

Again with gray veils  
Muttered conversations  
Hidden beneath breakfast  
And the body  
Open to unnecessary attendances  
Physiology mocked  
The ship sails with no captain  
Through fog mountains rise  
Blunt before truth  
Shaved and raw  
The memory blistered  
By false apologies  
Smiles where speech is lost  
Choked on crow's feathers

Grease creviced in silent lips  
Doors create allowances for breeze  
Breath of earth body  
Lung and flesh mistakes  
Coming up short and critical  
Assigning a process of reflection  
Criteria for staring blankly  
Disrespected mirrors  
A space without light  
Closed off windows  
To stifle air  
Render language mumbled  
We avoid reality  
Always trying to understand

Howls of earth breath  
Grass stalks bent  
Beneath predatory soles  
Reconcile the feeding habits  
Life on life  
To die between the orange and black  
Without statement  
A circus of silent acrobats  
Illiterate and blind  
The walls blank  
Echoes of laughter  
Joke's on the future  
Adapting laws of survival  
To compensate loss of sensation



Phooey Jove  
The holiday letters rearranged  
Build who you want to be  
Saturday is empty  
Decorate the book  
Paper between legs  
And perpetual lusting for shoes  
Prevents emptiness  
Imperatives delayed  
To interrogate the present  
Into kitchens  
The line evades  
Enough articles dancing around  
Affectionate ghosts

Sit down to write location  
And the back fails  
Ground angles tremor  
Tusks of walrus  
Dingy as the ice melts  
We use mailboxes to avoid  
Close proximity  
Turn polarity into birthday party  
First sips of community coffee  
Tongue sharp with ancestors  
Counting forward repeatedly  
Always dependent on pattern  
Until doors interrupt  
The open dark

Murder plots break radio static  
Spoils of the hunt  
Wandering among branches  
Snowflakes dust shoulders  
Evasive monsters  
Inspire enough awe to slaughter  
Traces followed  
Until the line extends  
Beyond sight  
Left to curse or honor absence  
Take the forest road alone  
Nearing horizons  
To dissipate with fog and dawn  
Push or pull the boundary

Pale light typical  
Exhaustions postpone an end  
Fingers sticky  
Accidental repetitions  
Of cold air  
Eyes revolt  
Manufacturing dark mornings  
Same clothes as yesterday  
Approaching the vanishing point  
Voices distant  
Question our own names  
Among the hum of familiarity  
Ways already known  
To make new roads on old paths

Red morning  
Fluctuations of pressure  
Spit through open doorways  
Both a release of toxicity  
And a representation of attitude  
Scream through closed lips  
Foundations of steam  
A form that supports nothing  
Victim to breath  
Atmosphere collapses lungs  
Prescribed morals  
Will not increase the supply of oxygen  
To take warning  
Or consume hollow air

Obstructed frames  
Formed false pretense  
Allow ties to be severed  
Via text message  
A solitary language of love  
Spoken in a room of hostile ears  
Insecurities condemn laughter  
Lose sight of locked elbows  
You're my peanut gallery  
"I" as poet is passionate  
Reframe the world  
For the world  
It is not coincidence  
That word is only a letter away from world

A form that held  
Loosens its grip  
To bed with dictionaries again  
Naked curve of new words  
Watering withered tongues  
Identify the source  
Of repetitive instruction  
An issued hush  
Silence is necessary  
For inspiration  
And rain  
Twice as wet  
In a desert  
Fourteen lines wide

Bent over urgent words  
Grizzly in morning's ravenous light  
To be understood  
Like the precipice  
Angled toward subconscious dream  
And still practice  
The slow indifference of cattle  
Leg deep in shit  
Blinded by insects  
Never so much as blinking  
A limit to the interpretation  
Of why bother  
Elaborate feasts on brown grass  
Even in sight of greener pastures



A serenade from foreign tongues  
Forked on conjugations  
Blueprints in red  
Create purple prose  
Overstated simplicity  
Dismissed respect  
For more syrup  
On breakfasts of sugar  
Bleach out the history of color  
To enjoy the luxuries  
The privileges  
Of truth's absence  
In spaces where  
We've fostered silence

Imposed divisions  
Hush a whole community  
An idiot's reprimand  
Against strong will  
And spoon-fed hormones  
Over processed emotions  
Evade group discussions  
Seeking refuge  
A solitary rhetoric  
Where kisses don't have to be stolen  
In order for love to be made  
Thoughts in the mouth  
Thick like the air of your intent  
Wasted on silent lovers

Silences observed  
Ignored for the sake of mental space  
Perverting the focus  
Lips raw  
Glutton for connection  
Light shadows veiled by open air  
Precision takes a steady hand  
Sharp corners of your eye  
Peeled back from hello  
In search of further words  
This first morning  
Reinventing adaptation to cold  
With what is chosen to be said  
What barbs hook and sliver the tongue?

Faulty blame  
The innocent charged  
In a war of propaganda  
Creating targets  
Where reason eludes  
Our voices cloak the ceiling  
A word hung  
An inadvertent microphone  
To guide communication's effort  
Out of the rain  
Where silences observed  
Welcome energies otherwise ignored  
Bring dormant sounds  
Through open doors

Locating one's self in unnecessary  
Positions coffee and honky-tonk  
Advertisements obscure rain's  
Journey down windows  
Invisible boundaries made obvious  
False goodbyes inspire the chase  
Where we find ourselves on occasion  
Lost in holiday unable to communicate  
Sleep is a voice left to its vice  
Whispered visions absent by morning  
Silent searches  
Strange pattern  
A screen of eyelids  
Walked into a million times

Paralyzed by the multitude  
Of thought a newly empty space  
Haunted by the presence of  
Pages resist the occupation of words  
Mired in excess frames  
Built around lack of explanation  
A border between what must  
Be learned  
And what must remain mysterious  
An allowance of blanks  
To nurse curiosity toward discovery  
Unknown verbs  
Doorways  
And decisions

Red morning burns fingertips printless  
The son unhealed  
Fallen into open hands  
Acceptance of will  
To change what can be effected  
Cleanliness falsified  
For a transparent image  
And a sharp tongue  
Questions curved over  
I heard your name on the radio  
Spoken by voices of harm  
Hung on your shoulder  
An accidental raven  
With unfinished thoughts

The table set  
A feast of secrets to suck dry the dream  
Of watching you enter the room naked  
No longer a scent left behind  
On the fingers that found the center  
Breath on the back of ears  
Warmed by desire  
To create a seamless body  
A life less frightening than silence where  
Tongues form intertwined patterns of dialogue  
To moisturize every crevice  
Of this dried bond  
Created out of love  
Maintained by thirst



What is the day?  
A sizzle in the gut  
Yesterday refluxed  
A bad taste hovering in the throat  
Thoughts scattered across emptiness  
Creating formations  
Capable of holding space  
An open-ended question  
Asked perpetually  
The third rotation around  
On the third planet  
In the first season  
Of the seventh year  
Since nothing happened

Significance forced in the form  
Of freezing rain  
Today as a literal slippery slope  
Where even our boots leave us  
Stranded  
Bent to the wind in a thin jacket  
A dry cold penetrates bone  
Moisture adopts the behavior of its oppressor  
Translucent veil makes breath visible  
Enough to steal the possibility of equal exchange  
So we blow into cupped hands  
Scavenge ownership of connection  
Only to look constantly  
At our own palms