

issue 37

streetcake



SEP 84

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i like

i like my jazz not to be too free
to flap in the breeze
then be caught just
at the edge
with a stitching that's not quite a seam
but sometimes is
a rough muscular chord
brass braid
or fine twine twisted embroiders
discovers new
patterns predestined in
braintap estry

brain waves because
they already knew

the man is gone
a reflecting on the instrument
it screams it frets a light and dark
wroughts an iron
gilds a lily
jigs a perfect puzzlement
then leaves him standing

@XVIII CENTURY

if Rococo people had access to internet
facebook would mostly store
guillotined heads
alive reminder permitted to twitt condolences
would watch French Revolution
televised on News24
in times where atmosphere was so thick
you halve it with an axe
King Louis should consider maintaining a blog
to warm up his image
beyond a hierarchy of opinion
everyone intended to review everything
on their own risk
with one to ten stars
and a box for conspiracy note
maid in Versailles was rude to me
Marie Antoinette eats too many biscuits
inevitably, national channel would be in duty to announce
great dictator's death
list a legacy of ruined lives he left behind
people would wait for a mobile alert
to read who is next to take a place
for the seat is never empty for long

Micro Pigs

Last night I dreamt
of death and torture
in a five-roomed shack
on a desert island
surrounded by oil and sewage.

I read online
that I'm psychologically damaged
and should seek professional help
immediately;
all this from a dream?
These experts should read
my poetry,
I'll show them the true darkness
in the twilight of my soul,
there are some things that no book can teach
and even the net can't help
when you're swimming in the heat
inside a graveyard.

There's a sense of urgency at times
that I cannot keep up with,
I wriggle and squirm and
write when I need the toilet
to get it over quickly,
I bite my thumb at the muse
and surrender to the nightmares.

How do you know this grey reality?
How do you avoid the Matrix
and jump out of bed knowing
you are not a simulation?

Is this not a dream?
Are you siding with the Angels?
Are you lying in a coma
in a hospital bed?

If you are reading this,
wake up –
we're not ready to say goodbye,
but the doctor says to kill the life
support if you don't return
by midnight.

Is this fact
or fiction?
I am just a dreamer

judy darley

Mermaid

I used to hold it on my tongue, my lips, like salt from the sea,
his land language ready to be spoken at will.
Now it wrests from me as the tide does, too fast for me to follow.
And his house, his bed, is arid.
This cave is all the home I want. Its damp shadows,
the promise of pools quenched
with each twist of the waves. He does not understand
my retreat. Knows only his loss.

Could he never bring himself to turn from everything
he holds to heart, abandon this parched terrain
for decade on decade, just for me?
No, I'm sure not. Does that mean I loved
him more, or simply that I was more?
Braver, stronger, than he ever knew.
Now we are old, I lose my grip on the land.
The sea calls my name in a way he never could.
//ends//

(In)Dependence

Like Mesut Ozil's missed penalty-
Stuttered and stopped by the keeper
On the way to the net-
I am inconsolable.

A quiet word to a close friend,
An arm around a shoulder,
Whispered confidence of class and form,
I'd thought it through:

A self-help plan for someone else.
You taught me how to laugh;
I taught you how to cry.
I hope I was there for you.

Snow Flurry

So I make it my goal.
Snow falls in flurries
of white goose feathers.

Such a time unexpected: it isn't the middle of a
night. Yet at dusk: walking alone, in the snow flurry,
to find a place I don't know,
I stick to my mind's map.

One we thought of on
the phone: when you left.
So I make it my goal,
whether I'm at home
in my body or away from it.