

TRANSIT ROCK

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TRANSIT ROCK

Rumble to limit contour,
followed the lines into the gutter—

evidence always straggles,
its trail to the primitive thing—

both hands on both handles
picking it out—

the legend self-visible—

Picture opens Book—

A man stands before two tall, thin baskets, while a large crowd stands and watches from behind a roped-off area. He has a pebble in his hand. He's trying to decide which basket to drop the pebble into. Another man is on the other side of the rope from the crowd. He glares at the man with the pebble. Then he makes a stamping gesture, the kind one makes to scare a pet. He deepens his glare. The man with the pebble looks down again at the baskets. He doesn't know what to do.

Trucks carry the filler
taken to the lit site

Like an outdoor game at night
the electric light is that
sort of social situation light

And now the rumbling meaning

they are filling it

A recent photo: an old woman lifts closed eyes to the sky, fists clenched, mouth awry, tears of rage. The younger woman behind her: in a protective posture, trying to sense where the shots are coming from. But the old one has lost her “in” to fear and responsiveness. Whatever features there are to her reaction, urge to flight isn’t one of them. What she has now—what she is left—is anguish, a tougher occupation of place, though not—except maybe as expressing a more mysterious solidity?—a safer one.

Rain falls on the other mountains
making this a sparser, farming
landscape

To write notes for voices
only, to be of certain
burrowings

explore the option-maze

eager, nothing but sureness

train lets you off

in the vast towns

She gets the message from the delivery of the line on the screen, or from a telegraphed incongruity, that something funny has been signified, and so obligingly barks out raucous, completely non-instinctive laughter-sounds.

The children were dressed in leather armor. They were put into an enclosure with raw meat strapped to their backs. Eagles were released from man-made aeries. They flew to the children and knocked them down. Over and over the children were knocked to the ground. (The eagles were being trained to hunt wolves.)

The clock starting
to fail does
it with

various repetitive
sounds, history's come
to us in the

vibrations of these
failing-sounds. Some
place being made on

a treadmill

Foreigners are thrilled by the American lack of depth and memory, experiencing it as something tantalizingly removed from their own heritage of culture-death, so that the new found land of superficiality and rapaciousness has the surprising aspect of hopeful pioneer space.

I grasp your erection and your head begins to nod in time. A falling sun makes the edges of bodies gather towards a topographical eclipse.

In a pocket of empire

the family furniture, then outdoors
wall of morning glories

first day warm,
anomalous

birth certificate many
times translated

spectrum falling back
into the water

The poet on the cover of his book is dressed in a bum's idea of Sunday best. He sits in the open air on some kind of ruins, legs rigidly crossed. Both of his arms are slightly raised, away from the body and not too high (he's gesticulating). Though he's in spacious surroundings he seems claustrated. A casual glance might yield the sense that he's being held at gunpoint. But a closer look reveals both hands to be supremely in blur, as of someone trying to fend off, or claw his way out of...pure air, perhaps. The name of his book is *The Freedom of the Poet*.

Where is the
piece of glass
Is it a piece
of sand

Look for glass and kismet

where footsteps revolve

The sun goes down
then the blue
does

The scrape follows you.

It auditions your gait.

Yes, I found you, but you brought me the sign

in the besieged city where the actors must rehearse for ever shorter periods
of time because they can no longer concentrate

To roam freely only
to find one
day

the distances ceased
function-
ing—

about as if this
stable were
no

longer there—
paying out a
tonal

sheet-anchor

In a small to medium-sized office room, a man is being questioned by another one. The man being questioned is wary and troubled; he is in fact being interrogated. The process has just started. It's possible that the session will develop (also possible that it won't) into something more serious than it yet is, more reactive, more applied. For now, there is the hint only of something slightly more heightened than a standard bureaucratic chat between two colleagues. In a corner an electric fan drones and turns.

Though not literally surveillance, the fan's combination of autonomy and sweep is kindred. What makes for vagueness is the tension between the almost featureless hum and the slight change in the hum when it backtracks. It's hard to say which is the backtrack and which is the forward stroke.

In this near monotony, the fan delimits a quality of short movement within rigidity that is—again, vaguely—discomforting. The one in the “office” is a quiet model, though not completely silent; not particularly obtrusive, only generally so. The man in charge doesn't need to speak above it.

The pencil rolls to the edge of the table—the hall empties out in early afternoon. Pinking shears at the fabric cut at diagonals, the vice president checks the security of his tie clasp. Jade-green tree shadows vibrate at the sill, surrounded by buttery light—the art deco up-down arrows of the elevator serve their era and many subsequent ones. Tripgears meeting the dial, abstract days percolate in the cinch between act and reception. As with the hours when they push them up to a level like overreaching a minimum. They'll push the hours on, hard they'll push them. The end of autumn a breathing-out, calm paternal eyes resting on the labor. Nothing will interfere with this patience. Comfort in the middle of the journey—a landscape of agreement, ribbons on shirtfronts, reverie in the valley.

In a room, an electric fan drones and turns.

The vagueness is essential.

It's near
but it's off

I could turn it around

They go to the heart.
It's off
but near

The world and the earth
Drumming
with fingers

Sky black but you wait.

Your pause is unique.

A French pop group, Kat Onoma, has made an album using Spicer's *Billy the Kid* as pretext. The sound is blandly proficient, somewhat dark-sounding but not too much, a eurostyle makeout music. Presumably guided by market considerations, they change the gender of "alias" from a "he" to a "she" and change "I love you Billy" to "how are you Billy." Thus the plangency and peculiar directionality of the original have been smoothed out to serve as a weekend soundtrack for heterosexual pseudo-outlaws. Or is it inevitable that this poet's perhaps first-ever appearance in a pop-culture context would be in the service of an outlaw emblematic that nowhere actually transgresses?

Pre-cognitive man in
his raw state

barked monosyllables
Noise in busts of air

a liking for drumming as
the least human,
no breath or
suggestibility

timbre or stretch,

impact the mind's ideal,

as Marinetti to bullets.

At the front of his pamphlet, opposite the title page, is a photograph of the spiritual leader. Though it's clearly supposed to function as a portrait, representing him in the manner he thinks most appropriate, his aspect suggests not serenity or formation, but a kind of happy cunning. Even more curious, a closer look reveals that this photograph is not a photograph at all, but an image which has been taken off a television screen or video monitor—his face and background are a stack of subtle horizontal lines. It could be that he's testing a symbological correspondence between spiritual regeneration and electronic promulgation, enacting his "practice" in a field where the hope is to ensnare readers, and thus followers, by setting up a prior synthetic relation with them as viewers.

The gleam in his eyes is predatory, deep, and hopeful.

Can't sleep: the repeatings

Four corners of the projected
room on the outside

Can't sleep: the repeatings

Four corners, etc.

Once upon a time there was a poet whose poetry became more and more concerned with the found universe of small surfaces. The clink of spoon against a cup, feel and brace of tongue against the not-quite-square of a postage stamp, the volley of coin into a slot, largish feel of keys in clumsy fingers, the border of petite corrugation around a sugar packet, so that to tear it open was to commit an enormity against vibrant fabric—these were the new coordinates of a poetry both created at a certain barrier and arrested there. This level of solipsism would usually be considered in a “disturbed” person merely the closest screen of the multiplicity of screens that comprise “the world’s difficulty.” It would signify an inability to undistract past the brush of immediateness. But. The poetry that resulted was vigorous, animated, and extending. It seemed to open up—a strange vista, perhaps, but a vista. It was like seeing the Sahara in a shoebox. People didn’t know what to think.

With his head
down, after
fact of deed

topped off the
fading reign like
a party surprise

to start this
funky border
travesty

protracted
spell of
map drawing

apprehenders
done up like
pierrots

Think of the human voice, its moment in the room, frequencies near it run to it, scufflings, murmur, competings in midrange, midspace.

Subtle carpentries of the wait.

No longer comfortable with putting portraits on their currency, they switched to animals.