

LET'S NOT CALL IT CONSEQUENCE

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A FRAGMENT OF ANYTHING YOU LIKE

1.

This voice
scattered and lifelike.

She stood
in the doorway, watching.
“What,” she asks, “is the first thing you remember?”

Rough sided shoulder bones
click and pop out of place.

Transformation slows into
the Atlantic Ocean
and there’s no proving it.

The stones along the river are empty mouths.
Asthmatic.

2.

The glance upwards.

See, sky never abandons.

Begs each day’s mournful
constancies.

The slats of a tanning bed:
light from a meridian fluency.
But you know what he means
if the stranger doesn’t mention atrocity.

Okay, now say what you came here for:

To stitch a crescent understanding.

The unleavened impressions,
oily smear of doubt against a white hot bulb and thus

to ache, so to speak,
is human.

THE LOGIC OF GREEN

It is, for instance, (an instant)
Autumn. Leaves spill
and cover
condom wrappers and cast-off shoes.
Kindergarteners drag their feet and leaves make it
sound like rain. Or, sound like *sound*. Or, sound.
What to use to cover things up.

Helicopters circle the neigh-
borhood all night. Search
lights move through
the hallways of my apartment. The blades' whirl
washes out the music from
the CD player—Bach's *Matthaus-Passion*.

Arias to drown out sirens,
drown out police boats dragging the river,
drown out raccoons rummaging through bins
filled with vodka bottles and rotten artichoke hearts.

Daily
sufferings arrange the day with a sudden composition.
Stones thrown from the 5th Ave. bridge sink into the
Scioto, (or x)
(let x stand for the Scioto River running through
Columbus, OH)
into the sludge at the bottom. No one swims
in x , at least
not in Columbus.

Let y now stand for the Erie canal, as in “I used to live near y where no one swims because once a kid jumped from a trestle and dove right through the bloated corpse of a cow that had been trapped when the locks were refilled in the spring.”

For every $y = x$, and every x
must have its day.

Still suffering
accrues, cannot be obscured, becomes a wideness
in which a cathedral springs up. What serves as votive
prayer in such a place, where love is a kind of reckoning, where
the Virgin’s hand curves into a question mark?

Borne along (*a wanting*) by a dread velocity—
naveward (*a hunger*), then down to the river
once more

down to the basket caught in the rushes, as the pharoah’s
daughter plucks x from the water,

lifts y into her arms so that all substitutions will
again

begin

again,

and looking never
is explanation and this is

what aphasia would be (like),

each alphabet spirited away,

what would you stop it if you could

and now where is there

to look away from,

OH

The beautiful mouth
 a flame
 again,
shape of such ache
 and plenty.

Disastrous intent,

reckon your ascent
in scares and feeble
unforgivings. What's the use of ladders

anyways? Climbing's too far.

The hand doesn't care.
The ear doesn't know.
The leg's done in.

This is the part where you laugh.
Piece it
together and I
promise the tongue will
take it apart.

SOME KINDS OF LOVE ARE MISTAKEN
FOR VISION

Her face, opened, like a mirror.
In the forgetfulness of touch
other places appear.

Three scurry home in a wind storm towards a toothless door.

Edges of even (if)
no one lives that way anymore, present
and accounted for. Or at least you think.

The kettle water begins to boil over,
its frothy whitening of the stove's top sends
one back to those moments of
insistence
and cost. *I meant almost
every word.*

That is to say, how'd
we come
to this—tumbled back to get ahead, to where the bookmark
gives the self one more bastion
of timeliness. What we do for love. Or lack thereof.

A fattened finch circles the belltower, its beak unhinged.

Matter/No matter. Rather,
what keeps
us
here?
Such rangeless environs. All eyes offered.
If the water were any deeper, I'd still drown
myself all
over again.

“IN THIS PORTION LOVE HAS NO SOLID GRIP”

I've seen your hand
 slide saintly across
a painted cheek.

If setting out were some cadenza,
it'd be finished soon enough,
 the fraught

absence of you,
let me count the ways.

This mind, all that's mine,
its terrifying vertigo,
 the light sings the canvas
in a yellow, blue arc.

And who would rather will
 nothingness than not
will? A man

 drives a bus
 into a plate glass window.

The nosebleeds and broken finger nails, a severed ear lies
parenthetic
in the raw grass, near the park.

 The house is quiet
 to be about
late afternoon, the coffee gone cold
 and forgetful,
and the floorboards are rough and in bare feet
the splinters
go deep, to the bone. This measure of how far

from me to there, matters enough.

Picture:

timid, timorous, a third word that we do not recognize.

A vocabulary to figure distance.

How you say...I'm not here now,
leave a message.

I want an answer more generous than this,
since meaning is no machine, but a luck

good as the promise
of a brief, almost beautiful world.