

Monograph

Poems

by R. Salvador Reyes

Monograph

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Triptych

The Coal Sea

It didn't just happen yesterday anymore. In its rapture, everything
Was thought nothing of. And between them is the unmeasured distance. The when. Which now
Is just molecular objects in stasis, born only by synapse flare—like a real one, bursting
White trailing tracers in the night, spectacular melancholy shining over coal sea, the tensile
Surface rippling mosaic dark angles pitched between paling brief glitter. Everything can be
Lit for a moment, fundamental to sadness.

~

It was in your coffee, the coal sea, burnt into the blackness, but you lift your
Head from it and everything in the world is the same. The mountain has been like nothing else
This summer, certain and alive in its shape against the azure sky. I come into its
View differently now, having been changed by it without knowing. They will ask for
A better explanation, but only you are far away from them, in no place for voices.

~

Have our locations worn themselves away from us? They must have. They are,
After all, destinations—the only thing that makes them true. And so the sea was the color of coal, even
When it was not. That these places are born in us makes no difference.

When you arrive, the only thing in the salty air is permanence.

The Consumption

It was always about fruit. Those plums. Our green apple, oranges. Seeing the world through
The objects we inhabit. Later begins the consumption. And the quantum promises: we will
Change the thing we see, merely through the looking. Don't try to believe it; it will still
Remain true. I sliced the orange and rotted it, both. The apple stayed half unpeeled

And bore the other half naked above the sink.

~

We never ate the bananas—they always went dark and into the bread. We used the
Toaster oven like a shelf, resting mugs and letting fruit linger. It's the life of a small kitchen—that
Everything happens together inside it. You might be told about something left behind and when
You look for it, you will begin there. You're certain, but it's too late
Anyway for finding. Always went dark and into the bread.

~

Strawberry tastes of what you wish could remain, but does not. This will be
Told to you, but you will forget. Even now, each tiny seed succumbs to becoming
Unseen.
Each sweetness finds its way into the air.

Night Island

We are in the haze of stars, he'd said. Meaning actual/physical, more than anything, to say: *we are Only part of it.* Oceanside, craning the dark for misty glint-specked Milky Way dragged across
A penetrated, fathomless sky—our own tentacle self uninterrupted into oblivion,
Beyond. No journey for the faint, but momentum will take

All things to their end.

~

I said the air was dead still in the night. Not moving an inch. And nothing could keep
Us there. We'd left this place so many times before. Ruins need not be visible. That the stillness
Of the deep night is a calculation of infinity, for its presence is manifest, for it requires
Nothing. When later the ponies began to lose themselves in the sanctuary of the dark island—gallop
And whinny, hoofing scattershot and stampeding under the barely-hued blackness—you knew
They felt it.
The way the night air must be broken out of.

~

You didn't think it meant anything, the last time, when we were the only ones left.
That no one will understand what I mean when I say that. On the shore—the lightning was orchestral, bruised
Florescence charging night sky. Clouds in nebula; ocean of electric conduction. Visions
To become perpetual. That the echo follows where the voice ends. You don't remember what
You said and the stormed, burst-open sky can be seen when you close your eyes.

The Deep Blue

She is on the other side. Unfindable, like I would have to breathe underwater. It is not what we think. Like in *The Abyss*, where they drown for each other to prove. Of these things we will do to survive, the most dangerous—descent, breath.

~

Far down the water. That way in the deep blue—like the dream of the ocean to become your life. Somewhere, the unquenchable. She is below you. A place you remember now, hollowed into earth, filled by ocean, vast in present tense; no telling where.

~

There is no world here but water in the bottomless sea. It came to you one night: uncanny, she is the one place where from inside water hides nothing, naked

In a way we are not possible—helix, gravity.

Entropy

Light dissolves trees, autumn into the leavened
Reds and evening. Everything is walked into softly, nothing
Here will hold it. That you will believe you know this again—season, almost
Perpetual. All sirens demand faith. Even
Innocence will not bind you away from them.

~

In the panic you said it will all burn
Out—black to black to black to
Nothing to know this again. Time is pure entropy. We are without
Context, subversion and dissonance, like what we are: a protrusion
Of being into the fabric—
Mere
Emergence, remnants.

~

What we will find waiting when the day ends. It is on
The mind. That she is afraid to say my name, that there is in everything
An admission. A reason to tell you—go
Home—if it wasn't burdened with so much
Proof. You do not want to know this again. It will haunt

And stray into everything.

Presence

When the end of time has come, what should we have said about this? That we are a ghost
Ship—haunted by blank helm and souls fuel. It is that we think it forward/propels/or we are
In tow. Nothing for
Ballast,
The only wish.

~

It is that you feel it. Nothing else. Living with the end of time is madness/entered
Universe/colors what you see in presence. Grab here. Even stale words scream it, realizing—once,
These were not until just now.

~

Of this magnificence molten/stone/wet/green every ever. Conglomerate super-hot cosmic
Amassed—undulating unseen distance into contemplating itself. Unlikely as any fact, as
Inevitable. You would want to wait; for the end of time to come, so you could see/watch for it all to be
Returned, to witness the light escape—like Hawking says, now certain: it will be

Transformed in darkness, but survive, *unrecognizable*.

She Will Tolerate the Doom of It

When I say this thing, this body is growing diffuse at its borders, then think it's the kind of use-
Less pretend not worth telling and realize the uncomfot, the undoing self is worse than that—not
Even a thing to be diffused—just a notion, my own, and infinitely dire. All the circles come back here
These days like I want to be able to write it—manifest!—on the chalkboard: TO MAKE
SOMETHING OF IT / teachable, benign, of

All the unfireables in the kiln.

~

To believe your self is worse, should be the condition you fear first, will always afflict
Everything to come after it. For her, you'll *nightingale*—if she will tolerate the doom of it. It's
Why. I'll wait for her now like we are the characters and can be watched knowing that
Often these are told for the wonderful of it, and even in the sad you can use the same words,
Because there's an irony in it or just that beauty that gathers on the sadness. I don't know if we're
Any of that or not. But I can feel the watching, the page turning. And I will love her for it. The terror
In the simplicity: that one of us will leave here from the other first. One of us will be alone.

~

On the mornings, you will want to hear about the ones when we slept in. And I've spent too long here
Now and it is all falling apart. But I'm not talking about that. I'm saying that I've spent too long
Here. Because I won't stop escaping into it, knowing which self is worse for surviving. And neither is.
So you are in there now, where the sounds of the grass
Are being made, and the sky is from when you are
Young—
All blue of it.

Night Island

It smells like summer another time now. What does that mean to you? That you'll want
All the girls again. That there was never enough of anything. Like evening on night
Island. Clouds disappearing from themselves at the edges, wisps in the drift of
Galaxies, evidence of what's left changing the light. How we are all,
For a series of moments, bathed in it, emulsified—their small figures along shore, horizon
Weighing tall grass in northward arc, incandescence brushing green
Under breeze, transforming what will remain unchanged. It is
The hour of the world that you will remember. When they take you
There, you will say it:
I was
In the air that was.

~

The night began late, it is the hour of its exact beginning. Like the DNA and
The genes that switch on and off—there is a time that all things cede themselves
To the existence, discover the aperture, all learn our place from the darkness. All things
Are all things, he said. But we are only what's *expressed*. So what became
Of the night and its time? You wander in, tearing fabric of the universe.

~

The wind is a body kneading night into the tent, the last of its life, and it
Rains. Harmless shallow waters in descent and only one more afterimage, burnt
Shadows with lightning backed flash, how thunder stamped everything into
The deep sand ground. There is something here. It keeps in a circle. It wanders in what you
Hear in the rain outside. And when it's left—the air gone cool like more
Nights in your memory, dark of the ocean near and its sounds: water folding
Into echoes against the drinking sand, wind unresisting over dunes. She asks

You if it is the hour you miss or the time itself. Can you see her doing that?

Where Else

That's where it's been hiding. In the back of that café, now gone—the one on
The Avenue, the one with the patio outside all the way at the end and the bees in the spring
And those tablecloths from some other time. There was nowhere else you would
Ever want on Sunday morning—they baked everything and the cinnamon rolls
Could be gone by ten. We divided the paper into those stacks we'd made, those slices
That stake our space in the morning of ideas. And the ordering, I almost didn't
Remember: Florentine with avocado on a croissant. Bacon. Sometimes she liked
The tofu scramble. We were in California now. You go all that way to be
Somewhere. All that forgetting to be done.

~

When you walk in, they are already eating peaches in the dark. Like waltzing star
Corpses they dance in the window light of the lightless kitchen. Midnight
In June. Have you been through that hour? This one hides until. In it here
There are peaches and they will do to give the summer away, like fresh
Produce commercials on those broadcast networks in those days of antennas.
In Chicago, heat was the feast and you were easy to die for it under the sun. And the after
Hours in the hot—go off into the farms for it now, deep into that Midwest and its
Hovering low over all the night. You couldn't give anything for it. Nothing in the world
Could take us there if we wanted. The trains don't sound like that anywhere
Else. You
Can't
Get them out of your head.

~

The deer are coming out of the woods. You did not think they could last
This long, moving from the shadows of all your driveways in all the years. Sanity
Says they cannot be the same ones. But everywhere else you've walked by now.
They are the same deer coming out of the woods. How they will not move for you. How they
Will always mention the manifestations you do not believe—the one where your old,
Gone and beautiful dog tracks the deer's blood in the snow in front of your parents' home. The way
She walks there now alone in that familiar dark all through that late hour. Her
Nose to the freezing earth, growing colder the way the dead always do. You will not spend one night
Watching her haunt your abandoned woods.

The dead are coming out of the woods.

Forms

Dumbfoundment; Flight Impulse; One of those strange satisfactions.

~

Rock

1 oxygen

2 hydrogen

∞ a certain kind of inexplicable awareness

- “There must be carbon in the rock,” I’ll say.
- Give the words out and build your water.
- Wait.
- Let rise.

It’s useless to ask where this derivation came from; it is unknowable. It’s all the last train out of darkness.

She’s on

Her way home, the glow outside
From an hour ago is inside
The lamp now—and that warm
Yellow here is so much like a
Dream that it’s I’m looking
Down from out there, part of that
Ink in the night speaking always
To the dark matter universe and all
Those thoughts leaking into
The expanses of space. When
Her car gets here I’ll
Want to remember all that, but
Forget it, so something can
Happen and the light will speak
For everything later.

Selected Memoriography

Dark sliding glass door, bright inside, a balcony stories up, lights from the windows on a building across the way—yellow stars on their side in the small world. *Inside of without the thought of an end.* Forest Park, IL: Living room, Two years old.¹

Thin cotton pajama shorts, and short sleeves and snaps, up late in the summer night on the couch kneeling, face against the screen metallic taste in my nose, soft blackness out among the blind pines, crickets. *Boundless or stillness.* Woodstock, IL: Family room, Seven years old.

¹Publishers information or imprint may be false or imagined. A painting from the parents' bedroom (Woodstock, IL: Four years old) has also found you there.

A whole city in my mind. On fire
With the lights of the future—the embers
And red of when glass canyons will bring in all the orange light of the glimmering
World. I lived there for what time we live when everything will come to be
In our days, our days on the high ledges looking over it made me lose my breath to think
Of returning there, placeless.

What You Can Have Happen

Early

She thought about a garden sometimes.

It was out there, in her imagination, the way you see clouds but don't
look for anything in them *Things Ungrown*

At the sink, the soil rinsed into the drain.

If she could see it in repetition, the years to come of it, the slender hands pruning
frail and plump under warm water, the landscape of what things will be
revealed when the soil comes free of it *To Someday Be Without It
or Longing*

Late

What she doesn't remember now.

That she is always somewhere else, among the places that are left, what she
took with her inside of there, to whittle away all those days *Time Remaining*

What you know now will take you
There. Some is even in the DNA. Some will be
Those small things you do, and think you are
Choosing, and maybe you are. But it will all
Happen anyway. You're in here now. You're reading

This.
You'll have to find your way out.

Partial Index of the History of the Moon

animals, the first time, marking, stabbing, *interbody broadcast*

arrivals of memory, *craters*

earth is near, its oceans intimate, the tides rising past mountains trying to escape to us, *all the knowledge of tides & a mirror on the moon reflecting distance*

You were here for all of it, part of you, everything
That makes you was witness. What is it about you that doesn't
Remember? Was there not enough beautiful? Weren't the tides
At such size of impossible consequence? And the animals
Feckless? What is it—that you rely on such puny recalcitrations?

This Is to Be Unbound

CONSCIOUSNESS, Always—Due to transformation into a condition of ideas, attachment to mechanical generators will ultimately cease. No information is available regarding what will follow.

I'd even forgotten what I was doing.

Confluence If Your Life Were Rivers

A Thing In This Place X

Y Yesterday

Y Possible

Deciduous Autumn X

Z

Happening; Vessel

Y - LIFE OF IMAGINATION OR MEMORY

X - LIFE OF METAPHOR

Z - LIFE OF BODY

A beautiful momentum has washed you
Into this. It arrived at you—waiting long
Enough in nothing to be caught where
This was going. If it weren't only still on
Its way, thrashing into that next part, where the story
Goes, where it loses you, where you are
The wake leaving forms in the suggestion of what has passed, the way all forms
Diminish, not meaning the same thing later, never giving
Full account of what it was
To be along the way.

**If You Want
Proof of This
Transaction**

Your former life.

Another plot of thyme

you gave your age for this

Narcissus bulbs, radiant and beguiling

later this will read:
a memory of your future

Water

water

water.

water.

water.

I wanted to imagine speaking with him, in our late days, and wish
The moment for myself—which is where the vanity lies. But nevermind
That, it's too late for us—listen, I think you should know, this won't stay
The same. That's all, just find it light
In your pocket. You
Will need it. I promise.

There is no telling what
You are. We're not given
Enough. Chase it from the windows where you
Keep all the words. Out there
Is where it should wander, the truth
Will make you dumb.

Mindful Star-Crossed Here

Couplet

Falling into chasms of the twilight,
Catch your glimpse before the gust of night.

The last question is: why fear
The thing we will not
Feel? Is it sadder
For the apple to be
Peeled or eaten? The plight.

Reductions

The Insect Makes Itself A Leaf, over time
In those places in the world where it can hide.
This is a dispatch from
Another
Universe where
Nothing visible
Matters.

And here it is lovely, all angles of green
Basins and veined, crepuscular
Ridges that deny
Our sight for what
Is there. A foundling of the vision
Into our beginning
As nothing
As
Calculations
Of the randomness
And inevitable.

**Time In Those Places
In The World Where
It Can Hide**

It is a kind
Of blinding, these
Paper-edged fronds wide
Of wing and
Thorax, narrow-leafed
Limbs that descend
And taper into
Delicate,
Verdurous, deceitful
Twigs.

Do you see
What it's saying—how it
Wounds its believer?

We heard sirens, saw
The corpses. An ambulance, a pick-up
Loaded with a back-hoe.

On the other side

Of the island

*He joined me, the foreigner, in the fresh water. I had been
Gone for days already. Neither of us knew*

*Their words for it, but there
Was talking, right until the end. And someone wishing*

Called out our name

And heard nothing back.

~

*He was more beautiful than I could have ever been. Even the way they found him, a dark greyed white scarf
Wrapped around of salted flesh exposed, inviting heaviness of water, all the
Ballast he ever wanted for all the dark places too dark to ever go.*

Island Dying

Night island brought it out in the day, the lunar, the water

Swallowing & sloughing

Off the dead—human sunken
In bay reeds like drown dolphin & dolphin
Spewn on shore

Sand like suffocated human.

In one place near the surface
They were exactly the same. Intransigent. He said,
There is the moon now, now
It's fully visible.

It is all this rage against the nothingness. The empty
Hopes of here, catastrophe chasing anything
Away from the vanish. Holiness is blasphemy, and marauding and ends
Up as limbs.

You can always take apart the parts and get nothing. Subtraction is exactly. Some of the limbs
Get carried, packed
On ice, driven, arrived, and thrown away. You can't give it back—there's some mistake
In understanding this, but Humpty Dumpty is horror, and we kept
Saying it, over and over.

Some of them are
Chopped off. The limbs. They must feel
Strange on their own, without
The weight of a body, needing
Someone to hold it, all the suffering left behind, excruciating somewhere else, but to it,

There is no way of knowing what it thinks of itself now.

They are, of course, cutting
Off heads. Old standard for the species. It's all done by proxy. Jesus tried
To point this out. He would've said *genetics*, but didn't have the word for it. It's the real message: the head is not
A limb. Nothing
Can be removed from itself.

Baghdad

Spiders start small and grew.

Now they're in everything
Like vines, webbed
Conquest into the landscape. All
The necessary entanglements, the laws
Of grasp.

This cloth yields
Constriction and lattice. Silk
Is like all things mistaken
For beauty and meant as
The fabric, waiting
Until its moment to prove. The thread
 Will wind that way if you let it.
Circles insist, and there's all
 That centrifugal force.

In Everything Like Vines

Spiders are anything
You want to be.
Webs are museums of what gets left.
That one terrified me. That one
 I loved. Spiders are robots. You're a robot. Don't argue. That's
 What was meant for you.

When she says goodbye to her cat, who
She has not been with for many years, she says
It is like

Falling into the sky, returning
To that place you've missed for so long but never
Have been.

The cat was going
To die. *Am I dreaming? Is that how I am
Here?* She knew of the past, the burrowing
Of loss, but did not understand
Why she had been away
So long.

Green apple. Abundant

Orange. Deep taut chilly
Plum. Supple

Radiant peach. Rich glistening

Strawberry. Tropic-curves, parrot-hued
Mango. And

The World Is All I've Ever Known

The darkly-rotten clutch of bananas that he wanders
About, the cat. You want to know
What he's doing with the fruit. But that's where they are one day. What else

Was going on came over the fruit. Each piece

Grew eyes like potatoes.

In the end, she'll unfurl into crying. She'll clutch the cat and wish for it all back. The cat will know that this is what
She is thinking. He will not understand it at all, but he will know.

When the water in the fruit went to ice, we
Assumed it was the cold, but it could
Have been
The time. When frost
Struck the orchard, it was like that. Because you
Said there is no cause, just the motions that
Surround them. And so he leapt out
The cold tree.

Nothing Could Get Out From The Night

In the woods they were no one but the woods. They were
Sticks in the wrinkle of water. They were always
Young, because the woods are only in that place
Where they were. The gargantuan
Trees were always ancient, the stars
Permanent, and night held
Everything in place, a darkness
Meant for everyone, the substance between all things
That is everywhere.

They were in the woods with each other. They brought
Coffee and food and a place to sleep in the night. And they left behind
Almost nothing, cleared space in the dirt, made fires, walked, the days
Each had their shape. But where were they in all
Of this? Hunt for them—if the woods are frozen, look for movement. They are
All evidence of themselves. Invisible, except in their presence.

It's what we come around to, in the end, not being
Alone. They went into the woods together. It was nothing, all of it, none of it
Mattered. Not the gnashing creeks swelled with spring, not the meadows and snow, not
An inch of unwitnessed green. He held her. She bathed in the river. It was meaningless.
All of these places and the two things that were.

They were in the woods together. Because it was there that you would see them. Against the still, giant, skyward
Fir he wrapped his arms and she photographed him. The moon moved through sky
Above them along the edges of night. There was all this silence in their place on the earth. They spoke in it.

In August Of The 21st Century Already, This Late In The History Of Man

Being a sphere
Was not enough. Pluto
Has been sent into the debris. Are you
Out there? Those who never believed in it; those
In the world of one less apparition at night? Do you know
What it was we saw out there?

It is not enough to orbit
The sun. We wish to be more
Than arbitrary, although nothing
Is so everything is. It is not enough
To be a circle. The facts speak for
Themselves. Their conversation needs
No listener.

Pluto came to us as a far off vision, which is what we were
Looking for. A place on the edge of everything
We know. To believe all that out there
Kept going on.

In reality, nothing has changed. We can still see Pluto in the night even though it is not true. It remains
Adrift, now proof of nothing, so grand has the universe grown since we first met. Our edges

Go beyond. In its last days, Pluto was the comfort of home, the nearest far away thing we ever knew.

It is our destiny in the 21st century to be tortured by the scope
Of places we will never be. Pluto is merely the sound
Of another unreachable lost, the same abyss
You came from, an old emptiness
Revealed and impaled.

One addendum
from the 20th
century. You
should know what
it was like before
the end of time.
History was still
a calculation we
were adding up.
Someone always
talked about the
future. We
preferred it not
be infinite,
resources being
what they were.
Can you imagine
what it was like
when they told us:
the universe will
go on in its
emptiness for-
ever. You are used
to it there now,
I'm sure, but there
was a time when
we did not even
know that the
world had ended.

Two skeletons

In

The

Mantua dirt, an embrace as fabric buried

Six millennia. Ancient youth Sewn into earth and entwined, lovers' clutch, nearness

Last in view that we all hope for.

Seen hidden in each mind, our tomb Romeo passes toward Verona, succulent desperation.

*If it were that we were
One idea, then this might
Say it, and if that idea was us and now
It's said, are we
Recurring? Are those your bones
And mine, are they
Ours, is it us?*

**We Have Been
So Old, My Love**

If the birds return as something else, the dinosaurs will be
In them too. Which is to say, they never went
Anywhere, either of them, just
Accumulated, receded, sought
What was perpetual, expressed and accumulated in multiplicity ad infinitum. Except not
Ad infinitum, because it all gets hot and goes, that's the future here.

But that's so far away now, let's let it be, and about the birds anyway. Find
Your margins in them—so you know what is outside you, know your floating
Place in that center for the moment it *does* hold, for *will not* is not *doesn't*, and we
Get that which is ours and is nothing if it didn't hold, which it does, and will not be undone for its
Finiteness. It's where you live, so it's everything.

What Is Before Is Gone

Where they lived—and I'll tell you, I knew them, so you'll know this is all real—where they lived
You could sit outside on the steps that led up into the sunroom. The ocean was beyond a forest over
The ridge, and it spread from there across the world. And salt from the ocean attached
To the world drifted in on the breeze that swept out of the cool mist. And in the yard the salt
Fell into the air beside the steps where they could sit.
In the time that they were there when it happened, they could inhale that air. And sometimes
A bird is in the small tree. Having returned
Only as itself this time. For no other reason than this moment is
Simply what is before is gone. So lost are we to all the unseen world.

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