

Political Archeology

How does one use a tooth to measure
a dynasty's rise and fall? Buried deep
in time's boneyard, its edges don't apply
themselves to chewing the nutrients of history.
To the contrary, the teeth are always snickering
at the Aisin Goro clan's inherited illnesses.
The excavation site tells us that not a single mouth
ever regretted its own ignorance:
the exsanguinated still express undying loyalty.
Of course, the teeth couldn't bite down on air,
but after the holidays, everyone forgot
to spit out the fragments. In the end,
fossils took care of everything, and
none of it outlasted the sighing of immortals.
Back then, a gust of wind could terrify,
in which case, the thing that couldn't be preserved
was surely the crackling sound at the blade's edge.

Postfuneralism

The dead one's lips are sewn together.
The grave must shut its mouth.
Lock the universe's pit inside the skull.

After death, you're still a prisoner.
You digest decay inside your coffin.
Moles hear your stifled laughter.

The dead can't be scared, but the cicadas' trill
will be more hopeless than reticence. When you turn
around, you'll run into the buried moon,

but the wardens will once more form a line
to keep watch over the breath you lost.
Silence is a knife hidden under the tongues of the living.

The dead are redeceased. The funeral is interred.
When the great earth wakes, only the dead stand up.

Angry Birds-ism

Hard to avoid self-sacrifice. The quails in the scenery
can break your heart, and also raise a laugh.

There is no reason for anger.

When the weather's good, go to war. Crows fall from the sky
and become a sickness. Compared to bullets,
smiles look more like conspiracy.

Crying for mates, even in death.

Try another magpie's spooking at the bowstring - still bird-brained.
Once you've left and lost everything, incessant gunfire
approaches incest, bludgeons out more enemies.

Your feathers so beautiful, they're useless.

Valiance begins in joy, playing with a parrot
then scowling in rage, scattering vengeful ghosts all over the floor.

Nothing but emptiness in your gut.

The Post-Saleist's Weekly Journal

The first day, I was selling nightmares,
but not a single one sold.
Dreams on dreams were piled in my bedroom,
linked like sinews to bone.

The next day, I sold yawns instead, but no one came around.
Fresh, steaming yawns - were they too wet,
did their weight exceed what the market would bear?

On the third day, I started selling sneezes.
A sharp blast - more customers fled than rushed over.
It seemed weird to me: as if
more privacy was the only way to go?

On the fourth day, I decided to sell laughs.
Huh-huh, ha-ha, hee-hee, heh-heh. Naturally,
hee-hee was top-shelf, because it's so hard.
The lover who jumped onto the window to snatch some
broke his front teeth, couldn't close his lips.

On the fifth day, I thought heartbeats would sell better.
But the tat-tatting machine guns, tom-tomming drumbeats
around me were oh-so painful, oh-so popular.
In the end, heartbeats couldn't hold out, and fell over.

On the sixth day, I began secretly selling desire.
Blushes, heavy breathing, erections, everything had to go.
Buyer and seller collapsed from exhaustion.

On the last day, all I had left was dreamless sleep.
I dozed off as I demonstrated, and knew no more.

LETTERS BREAD BOOKMARKS

LETTERS

Before lunch, you hear shouting in an envelope.
You open it: a love letter
sent by local post, the signature saying
Nocturne.

You resolve to seal it shut. Like
burying a nightingale. You fear

that song. You throw it back in the post bin
until the next day, when
it's whining again in your mailbox

BREAD

You slice bread with a comb. Here is
the hair of the dead, love baked
in coquetry, still warm.

The bread gets blacker, crumbs
harder to organize:

Your face is burned black before you've washed.
Your sensory organs stick in your throat.
They carry a beautiful hunger.

BOOKMARKS

You open a dust-covered book:
a hand
holds a bookmark's place.

It will not leave, it stubbornly
grips this word
one period.

Dessicated hand, this page-born fossil
awaits another hand's clapping

Hula Hoops

1.

People in kid's clothes learning to hula hoop
twist more than just their torsos:
they relate to orbital revolutions. These ages,
these untethered tracks.

What's been hula'd once must be thrown out once.
What can't be tossed, hold at the navel
and it will no longer be pain. (Except for dust
that has lost all expression.)

Will what's left be stable as a fixed star?
Or soaked senseless by overflows of air,
or malcontented sweat?

Learning to hula creates warmth even in summer.
They drape chains over themselves, place a palace on their head
Gale winds only blow around their hips.

2.

Long, slender blood, hard blood, flying blood
has never been abandoned for good.
Just as the emptied breast is nearly suffocating
to the infant. Nearly has no dance.

Screams heard at midnight won't repeat at dawn.
Because this is dawn's drill, the dexterous dodge
What can't be eaten, supplement with pranks.
Save the soy paste noodles. Don't drink broth that ladled off human meat.

Once passed through dawn, untie-me games intensify.
IUDs substitute for what the mother can't embrace.
Pass by your old home, and you'll see or hear

a simple rondo forcing us to rest.
Lie inside an interesting war. At one whistle
innumerable children disappear, returning to the womb.

Letter to the Apostles

Sons of alms-beggars, men with deserts in hand
Who yearns for sunlight to spatter like rain?
Stabbing sunlight turns the landscape tighter
They adore, yet despise even more
the nation they see in dreams and vomit up
Growing daily, chewing monsters in the liquid brain
Daily squeezing the flesh dry, dicing it
Even in September psalms, the rivers
cross-hatching their palms are long since dry
They fish, far from the schools swimming in their veins
When they hear a woman's whistle, they face pirates.
Yet only one murmur becomes a corpse
Their vespers bell floats onto the wind's shoulders
Mouthing prayers of escape, the disciple's weapon
is either tomorrow's gold or last night's poems

Scenery and Plot

She runs to me slippery wet, her shadow behind
snow-white, a comet, she says
“Let’s go see a movie.” I hear
more sounds of breathing at night
“Let’s go for ice cream,” she says

But I don’t have time. I turn around
and she is before me again. She reaches in
and pulls out half an apple, her hand bright red
as if an apple were a head. But
I’m hurrying to a dream. I furiously
put on pyjamas and sit in the sedan chair.
She fiddles with my buttons: “I want to go back to sunny weather.”

That was truly a colorful weekend. We drove
and didn’t notice squirrels crushed by the roadside.
Only lakes, water surfaces so fragile
I couldn’t bear to jump in. Her hand quivered
like a dying fish. Her eyes were full
of tears, which finally dripped on the clanging gunwale
“It’s so sweet,” she licked sunlight,
her tongue flashing, a lighthouse
stuck out of her black hole mouth.

But I don’t have time. I turn, and
it’s another her, “Let’s go dig clams.”
I hear thunder. She says,
“Quick, quick,” while taking off her coat.
Wind savages the cheeks, the leaved branches’ laughter
grows ever colder, basket on her elbow
she sinks hands and breasts into the sand flats.
“A nap, and then it’ll be time for dinner.”
My gaze ranges toward the water –
she doesn’t know it. “Just one minute more.”

My face crawls with ants, an *adagio* gnawing
in an orchestral piece.
Did I leave my face at our first location?
No one can find it. In dreams
I only hear her say once more,
“Open the window curtain.” But I’m afraid
of birds like sunlight. I cloak myself in the curtain

and lie down in the boat of the past, awaiting a dream in a dream.

She says, "Just one last time."

It's almost her voice of several years ago. I look up;

she flashes past the door. Again I close

my eyes. Sunlight floods the entire room.

"Is that coffee or burning?" she screams.