

HOME FRONT

Poems of the Bush II Years

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JLF!

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For You, reading. For All, waiting.

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-LH

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child of the

child of the missing limb the heart
of the world now missing the child
of the missing garden the roots of the child
now missing
the child of the river running
the child of the river broken into sides
into banks into nightmares
the child cannot climb
who says
now i can't sleep i try to forget
i have such difficulty feeling anymore
who is the child of misvisions who knows
bombs among spring flowers
who is the powerless child
of wishes of fathers of mothers
wanting warm-and-safe-at-home
not the child of the burning cloud not
the child of mistrials or freely
the large stone flung one afternoon
when thought was simple and looking up
there was only blue: no
no stone nothing thrown or born
into the heart of the child
who forgot the sound of laughter
who remembers friends
who says which live
which are dead
who says
i am speaking to you
will the waiting be long?

2000

HOME FRONT

Here, in 2003

The day is spent. Never adequate hours. To work. Hard enough. Fast enough. Bending over the soiled floor of history, the sponge and bucket of thinking loosed. So little time thinking. After all the efforts of spring, things could fail, things could fall apart, and that red-winged black bird sitting on the fence over there will have to fly elsewhere. Only. The problem becomes. The question. All over. Again. And then: How can elsewhere be saved? How can spring singing be rescued, how can simple crocuses push their low determination through threatened soil year after year? In traveling to the pristine, the quiet places. Where. Where will the pristine, quiet places be?

The day is spent considering. The killing. Fields. The bottling, the boxing the housed, the now for-sale. Pitched. Clever advertisement. Designed thinking. Designer Thoughts. Guarded. Corralled. And here the unsanitary. Here the land serving to

feed. Here the chemical here the air here the water
the soil.

The day is spent pulling away from reigns of terror
that terror is rain depleted, depleting, settling in.
Here, the dust, the finer “never mind.” Here the
erosive *what can I do* sitting beneath pallets of class
differentials, the definitions of turf control rolled.
Sod the green expressionism of monotony.

The day is spent thinking of economics, the word
livelihood suited to pumping poisons as vein. Vein,
vein, pipeline. Vein, vein, tributary. Vein, vein,
infiltrator. Vein, vein, body of blood. Into. Into.
Pumping. Into. Into. Weapons. Pumping. Into.
Into. Blowing. Pumping. Exploding. Pumping.
Lead vein. Nukey vein. Dead vein. Irradiated vein.
Sea of uranium. Theraped receptacle. Needled in.
Vein. Vein. Poison to cure, vein. Poison to kill,
vein. Poison to succeed, vein. Ailments eliminated.
Pumping, pumping human. Pumping, pumping
vein.

The spent day is lived. Through. Consideration.
Here the various, here the wars here the cultural
manifestations the sounds of good and evil tailored
to Axes tallied in numbers and polls. Corporate
desigN[ation]. Media. Minded. Media-Mind.
MediaMind, MediaMind where are you now?
MediaMind MediaMind what do you tell? Who.
Express. Them. Selves. MediaMind, MediaMind,
what do you create? MediaMind, MediaMind.
What? Conglomerate.

The day is spent thinking of thinking alone and the
vast political implications of emissions bought and
sold in the globally-warmed evaporating range while
ranchers and herders accept perfected Clones.

The day is spent wondering how the inferred voice is
God. God calls. God is up for war. God is on
many tongues. God is angelic. God is system. God
is duty. God is patriotically pinned and printed.
Here are sweatshirts of Cash Opportunity. Here,
Irony. American Flag. Made in China. Here God
watches from the breadth of cotton-coveted breast.

Machine wash. Warm. Tumble dry. Low.
Sweatshirts from sweatshops, flags draped. Flags
flying. Flags shipped home.

The day is spent watching a nation divide itself over
words: water oil water soil water oil water air
water oil water soil water oil water food.

The day is spent wondering what any place can be.
Beyond. Divisive shredding. Connection each to
each. Each to water. Each to species. Each to air.
Each to other.

The day is spent drawing conclusions that belief and
education do not guarantee introspection or the
understanding that continuity is interdependent
diversity.

The day is spent watching an ant never tire of pulling
its survival from so many angles.

The day is spent writing. It. All.

In a notebook where the dried ink on frayed and dog-eared pages starts to fade. In a notebook determining. In a notebook the worth of any day. In a notebook the future of IF. In a notebook the downward. The spiral. The inhumane. In a notebook the anti-planet. In a notebook. Grief. Bending. Over. The inane.

In a notebook where the dried ink on frayed and dog-eared pages starts to fade there is news of ozone and dead zones, of a primate's probable extinction, news of terror and war, of growth hormones, human clones, of laboratories of salmon, of genetic pollution, the garden muds in Congo. In a notebook, the ravages and leveled ground, the unaccounted-for in ground that cannot be accounted for, ground that has been zeroed, negated, zeroed in on.

In a notebook. Ink on frayed and dog-eared pages. Long-since dried. Here. There. Record. Arbitrary marks penned. Fear and pain made to sound.

Between. Stains. Coffee. Words. Fruit. Words.
Stains dropped and written in like the garden of
so much trouble there is myth by which to leave.
In a notebook. Wakeful. Journaling. Away.
The metaphors of Night.

There it was then. And now. Here. The perhaps.
The observed. The possible.

Now.

Letter from the Primrose Path

Today,
I feel like nothing more
than an outrageous contradictory blank page
of prose filling nothing
with emptiness.
I will eat this for breakfast.
I will consider my arguments.
Vessel of poetry,
I offer you pigs, toast, juice,
gene-determined children,
sunrise, moons, and undetermined mornings,
while still in this old, tiresome world, soldiers march,
men, women, and children fire weapons or run
among the rubble of cities that used to be
where there are no more beds, no markets,
and where all arguments stand with their backs
against remaining walls and where
all reasons for killing are upheld.
Meanwhile, Vessel,
your clever, dactylic sheep climb
over these lines like mountains.
Your bulbs break from your spring ground
time and again, red and full of vanity,
despite their would-be beauty.
Your little pigeons flock and gather up
the bouqueted niceties tied with the inoffensive lace
of silent agreement not to speak or to speak
sweet nothings and you think you are dear
as a Valentine while I push and push
and push again, while I insist you tell me
of the other side I won't forget,
that is the unlit side, side into which you bury

your anger and your pain,
side from which is born
your anger and your pain,
side that is, when spoken, the chance in *hope*,
the chance in *change*.
But today, Vessel, my emptiness,
you have nothing to say.
It's windy.
The sun is out.
The stores are full of daffodils and *prima veras*.
You didn't sleep well last night.
Broken dreams pulled at your feet.

April 2000

Song of the Dream-Deferred Land

-after Langston Hughes

What's wrong
with Our Murderous
 Murdering Sons?
Are They
 An Accident
 Improbable
as the Bomb
 or just a minor outcome
 from living a little too numb?
What's wrong
with Our Murderous
 Murdering Sons?
Should we try Them
 as Adults
jail Them
 never set Them free?
Should we
 offer up Their very lives
for the lives They'll take
 on a killing spree?
We could just shoot Them in the head.
We could electrocute.
We could inject Them 'til they're dead.
What's wrong
with Our Murderous
 Murdering Sons?
Are They
 An Accident
 Improbable
as the Bomb?

March 2001

The Quiet Life

Lately I've developed a taste for the quiet life. I think how we could lie and talk together through the night. -Su Tung 'po

We could lie together head to head or
side by side and on a moonless cloudless
summer's night watch the sky and we could tell
our stories whichever way we'd choose and I
would choose to tell you how one time all alone
I lay in a field of corn just to watch
the sudden horizontal float and green shifting
of the shimmering borealis strewn in sheets
that flew across the sky and I would only want
to leave you with the charge of such energy
as it burst - burst & flared to shift and fade &
burst & flare again in the pure silence
of a night too cool for crickets or frogs
But of course to know any of this
we would have to be together
head to head
or at least in the garden
side by side

January 2001

how incense burned as prayers flew up
for those now flown away
while still they go those geese
up up up
from the chilling lake and the quickening slant
of the late-day sun—
Up over rooftops and trees
Up in one great slow show of lift
Of riding on all that remains for them
between each suspending flap
that turns them out
on air

September 7, 2001

Entry, Monday after

Gray skies now.
I return to poetry
like an obelisk / a warning / a sentiment
hanging over this page like weather
all the news of storming burning my lines of sight
until I blur with the rhetoric of One*
about to unfold
the umbrella policy of promise
that something
something
is about to come
is gathering itself along the horizon
is waiting in the corners of consciousness
like a nightmare
unremembered

September 17, 2001

* President George W. Bush



Remembering WWI, Branko Gulin