



Dark Hope

Vernon Frazer

&

Michelle Greenblatt

Argotist Ebooks

Cover image by Ginny O'Brien

Copyright © Vernon Frazer & Michelle Greenblatt 2011

All rights reserved

Argotist Ebooks

Several of the poems in this collection previously appeared in *Admit Two*,
The Argotist Online, *Peek Review* and *>2: An Anthology of New Collaborative Poetry*.

Dark Hope

A Long-Held Supposition

Through the curved roads

of the iced empire

the thawed assassin flowed

off-

topic

and into

as

its

blood that jutted from his breastbone

in tiny blackened

breaths

a

darkened clavicle

straining for deeper bubbles

sequence

frothing the greasy pendulum

I have come back from

the shearing, where cenotaphs and rhododendrons are buried

in a

poem

whose clearing tongues writhe,

their hurried gasps lurid

on each other's cheeks where nearly everyone had left

- that burnt star, ochre smelling and tasting of melt,

as the core of a lost appendage,

vaguely remembering wool or a floe
that drifts along in sodden waters. The picturesque summit stood on
later fire, pursued by steaming hostages from hated forums
dismembering a grated glyph
with our thoughts alight, we were still breathless
to it.

Moving in the moment frozen in the frieze

on- time turned on its praxis,

topic a long-held supposition, replete with asterisks.

Among All Objects

Rip at the wingtips and turn at the very round

place, she said. A faceless man

burned red in the grip,

churning

a slow pace, its sound deadened

only throbbled darker as she counted how many pieces of herself

became aware of this condition. the principal aspect of

her wary footsteps, the same as

positioning, amounted to a cautious

respect

whereas his

history of the shadow pointed towards

recollection, when autumn came over him, something unlike being

tilted toward the rim of his last lost undertaking

A dip into recitations of past somnolence assuaged her, seeing that

many others,

vacating their seats to blindness,

left a deft persuasion hacking at subtlety between
the eyebrows and a binary decision not to go imminently into the solid

rain,

not to tense

herself against

its pelting whirl, or slowly shift an optical elision

away from its fiery mother,

her dusty doors, slanted-closed windows,

Among all objects

may she give this one

a name

Definitions of Obscurity

The shred of a tarnished illusion

breathes / at our third well
where I lower the bucket

and come up with air

all insistence falls at the dew drop
where longing posts its empty vigil

and the distance purples with age,

where at the river's edge there is singing.

The cubist pyramids ringing through the void
mirror off the mountains

behind the empty bank

which falls like water only to be indented

by the singing at the sand's dry

edge.

A vision

of sound

rises from the dew-glittered grit, frail

syllables fall off the tongue, upward

and back,

the golden confetti

of shortened breath

spiraling

in the minds' twisting winds

impedes the perceived call to arms

that drizzles the liquidtop.

Perhaps the metronome grew tired of counting when the numbers stopped adding up
and the melody stayed the same,

a chant of time crossed

by plastic wolves and faerie tales of cities made

of gold. Traveling across the tear
in the continuum

its ragged fabric whistles in sequential winds
where clocks,

lost to chronology, seek vapor trails

where music

used to ring synesthetic overtones

lost at the dry trickle of meaning's edge

where dust pours over

definitions
of
obscurity

the filters, shortening
breath
& sight

Lightly as the Darkness Fits

inlet on the mountain submarine timidity as lightly as the darkness
fits into a shelf in my brain, so is the shelved

clangorous dust that makes

its way into the cracks in my eyes a wavering

dusk bold as the splintered platform, a husk

of its former cognition

bleeding wheat

the color of sky.

Autonomic sunsets weave beige lagoon reflections,

an arid frigidity numbing the cleaving portico hedge

as it leaves

pasteurized colors in the mix

of slaving admirers, gone

the way of the stratagem index. A tentacle pursued, its rubber pace

a danger

to all fully automatic weapons. I dive

into deafness as the subatomic harmonies break
up heaven into little chinks of starlight. Perfect propriety, a cracked bell,
shuddering of sleep releases the bride from the corpse.

A marriage, once removed , can whisk away
conundrum's bottled ashes, a weeping urn
containing dust

of cartilage turned

separation anxiety

in the shade of a sweltering hammock, sweat beads galore

Mysteries of the Present

Transient bottle acclamations

eliminate the vast accrual
of quasi

solid

space

where we pick up water

& Baudelaire's black tulip,

lost and found

again

a flavor

prescient

as

synthetic ennui

a

dandy's

gift

from

the

present

to the future

tense--

so you would like to know why my oracular

tenses

promise not a future. I will prophecy

& prophecy,

if only to diagnose the present,

tongues of past
& future

in obscure

in the clarity Cassandra
melded, rumors

grow

wings

fly around
the stage

as bitterness fades to half-view in the vat of her throat, bubbling
dark wisdom through the ancient froth, lips worth licking to those who

knew

the things

she meant

New Tales of Definition

The belly up sun floated on the tide and breathed

the taste

of the salty water.

Nothing could allay

the sensation of jellyfish protruding

cautionary tales

of the tongueless

large river
pebbles

where all the necessary
explanations accorded the whole

of the unfolding
reef

alongside

a coral

of their secret,
living among

the root to

the water's whirls, the waves of its breathing

those who stand

in the waves

and let

the flood

of sunlight criss

cross

the fatty afternoon
sloughing snakeskin

and white

netting

into their wake, a new identity unpeeled, revealed as
a silence/ a pause/ a silence

finally we advance to skin of the matter, coiling
fresh among the flashing rays,

taking in new tales

of definition

in order to decide
what tiny mouth

to swallow with

we stood for hours

with the irreconcilable

letting ourselves slip

again

and again

into aimless dipping,

a pause / a silence / a pause

the inverted refrain

a

tongue swallowing

the point-of-view, how he must have wondered

saying I

know you from somewhere

(now the cypress trees are swaying)

now the blood reaches the shoreline.

A crest of red foam breeches the sunlight
lasers seeking to find the unfamiliar, shed

protocols, boiling the sand,

ruins left by those who

the festering

shift the root to naming

scarred secrets,

ambulatory

Transient Variations

A trail of transient variations

allows the key that opens the drawer (walking further

in the country)

a rural semblance unlocked

with a slow, trembling turn

Imprisoned in a warrior metal skin

am i killed? am I

dead as the forest's storied silence

or merely bleeding new tears

of grassmass that january crops wrinkle

as my silver ribs

thaw like raw meat

a spectacle basting
under the heat of sulfur skies,
an aftertaste

of rust turning bitter

water (churning) undercover; it will find me

unprepared

(naked or not)

for the trees' whispered rumors

of my unbecoming

or the wait

of this midnight moment's precise point

a cry steamed into the air, the cries all wrung their hands and sang

an undersong bombs into words and his own bleeding

of subtonal whispering soft desires to breathe

refrains explosions, new streams

leading to

life leading him to crossroads in the darkness, to crossroads of light

while dying stars cast their mist over screaming vision--our talk was

of too little, of too
much. Of gold across
blood. Your eyes looked at

the hour, looked

away. A team of horses stood by you asked, Am I killed or just
forgotten?

And the answer came, vague as past dust, whispering

its song
of death as memory

and memory

the nearest life

of absence
in a

present form

But the moon must say
and stay as well
summer

this secret

knotted a theorem

into a terrific battle

scorched in two
under the heat

between the heart and the hypotenuse
angling their way

toward

a

remembered presence

if conjoining proves possible

from the head to the heart, what inscribed itself on the inside of your lip
deepens your death.

(That we once read...there is no end

of space / time /

matter) We're still

just that.

Whisper over the World

The dust of the strayed
world
filtered through elliptic fragments,
its staid whirl
a cautious stratagem against
dawn to dark, the breath trying
to come out while all clocks agree, ashes do not
return to the biomass
afflicted with the storied aches of plantain marbles
cast against the sky silent
day by silent night
singing by the fires of cinder pendulums
sweeping slowly under strained attempts
to whisper
over the world, a blazing star.

Winging Through the Deadly Night

Hostage perimeter central vexation

gutters the pits of ancient remorse

where shredders

LOOM

insensate.

Temporal shadows hijack

hazel light

of

simmering inundation fetters

snatching homilies from plural

vestiges

FLAUNTING

bivalve cuspidors

which swell like city blocks in summer heat

& energy density departs

simile, blackbirds

as winging through the deadly night,

they long for metaphorical exhortation

run from grinning extortion batteries
idly storing a horticultural surcharge--

Water breaks over the

blackness--

where, whetting the flavor of

my own body

mercilessly,

yearns an italic for a taste of your mercy,

its metallic sweat an ionized comfort begging
through pangs of reciprocity, wet

tongue on dry knife

sliding

between the creamy

passion

blades of her uninterrupted legs--slathering

slime of ancient bitumen pits across voluptuous pituitary submissions,
gathering grandly, yet urgently

as you ride

astride my anthracite cries

in penitence

and joy and sometimes wake

hard

between my thighs

past my thermonuclear

threnody

(the choir
for a formless blue self,

the remains of the passion

to salvage
straining)

mercurial vapors

rising

toward renascent nomenclature,

a slow tide, and

the breaking brackets of

a

terrible sweetness

--since every minute falls faster as enumerated shadows move into a lit corner of

gossamer ambiguities, its gravity
reveals overtures,

a low aside

aches and crackles

above unbearable needs,

a

cackle in the dark chases a racing clock

past time
's deathly dimensions

the

flavor

of sickly

syrup

indents another inward sun

towards a flood of lightning bolts

clawing at
their replete measure

beneath the hitch of a sub gum harness, a treasure deleted among dolts
frightening for their dim forbearance, a pawing disruption no word can
savor,

except for the juice

leaking its disruption

as their

pleasure's

blood, black and brilliant, cindery to

the touch, a diminutive saffron, a deliberate cerise,

the familiar spirit of the place rests upon stooped shoulders
and rankled reproduction of

fantasian replicas, cranky

as

wet tinder lacking

testy

its

ruddy batons to feed them

toward

intuitive graces,

motion

leaving

charged

their detestable bandits

Wings of Plastic

Wings of plastic,

(as the earth was a vortex and opened into) suicidal dreams,

the streaming whirl of screaming minds

tunneling toward the comforting blanket of darkness

or the next flight out,

might return to oneself in a higher order. Pyramid

of trees I climb through, carting away the blood and leaves,

a controlled
disaster,

- gaping at the apex ruins weaving through the lattice spaces

to view the history

scattered

among scars of sky

in which vortices of light

flutter across the trembling of water

in hands cupped heavenward

to grasp the glistening

or the drops

that the tree catches while being flayed by lightning

in the middle

of a storm

Liquid Couplets

your

liquid

couplets

best make

a recipe

mooning

for doublets

throughout

a cascade

of lost suns

& on the faster train I wave a glorious goodbye

to the facade that has

been

us,

a fading
shine, its distance

re-

post-mortem haze

of honeygold hanged men, when traffic relaxes

back to still life
into the mortuary
the extention of my liability
littered across the
streets like road salt.

Today you are as brittle as ceramic
and the houses wheel by.

Nothing seems out
of
place

except the restless ocean
at my door

creeping

and requesting at my

entry

double

(subtle entreaty) toeline shore

to take over more granules

than one

can steal

or shred

time slabbed on the counter like meat; I fear harm from the page which
confuses the child whom I cannot control. I teeter on the razor's edge of

adulterous thought

i | | | |
live | | |
in | surging | its
power

the margins | |
overwhelming
of | |
as
the greater
diffusion | confusion | risk of

& loss / gain

&

temptations brought

to
flesh