

A Kind of Lincoln

Even now more eloquent
 than those long April twilights
 we've spent with our American cousin,
 where over and over the finest actor
 of his time catches a spur on the dunging,
 limps to the fresh horse waiting forever
 by the backstage door and yet again
 a nation mourns, pushes grimly on
 through the centuries watching you ride
 that stone throne, your face a country
 of sharp angles where irony
 meets sadness, staring straight ahead.

She Listened

She listened to me like I was the Grand Canyon
 into which she had just tossed a pea,
 like I was a giant cloud and she
 was thirsty brown earth.
 She leaned over and looked at me
 like god had just appeared
 on her iPhone. She listened like
 she was reading my lips with her own.
 She listened to me like a customs officer
 suspecting I had lied about my luggage,
 like I was a coyote who had just chewed off
 its own foot to escape the sprung trap
 she had baited with perfection
 just by listening.

Karaoke Night

He pushes against the weight of the bass line,
 lifting it up off his shoulders, mouth sprung wide
 to wallow the room's rank clamor, skull buzz
 background, the wireless and wired,
 bones of the wind: he struggles to take it all in.
 Hunched lonesome now as a single ant
 traversing the Grand Tetons, he reaches
 down into his bottomless longing,
 clutches the muck in both his hands,
 then climbs the song back up
 through his flexed throat, past his fear,
 spits it out fresh into everyone's ear,
 face wet as a newborn in the spotlight.

Cookbooks of the Dead

These dog-eared pages thinned by thumbs
 wet by tongues of women dead
 now fifty years wait in a row,
 lined up across this flea market table
 to offer their elegies to the Sunday lamb
 by a cloth, the carrots boiled fork-soft,
 the flour sifter still attached
 to the Hoosier's cupboard door, and
 the bowl of dusty welcome still set out
 and waiting, full of foil-wrapped kisses
 untasted since Dewey beat Truman.

How to Read *Crossing Brooklyn Ferry*

You will need a darkness well past midnight,
 a single cone of desk light to guide you
 sightful with its long white hand.

And you will need to need these words, spoken
 across three separate centuries, his whispered
 breath against your ear from narrow streets
 of horse manure with drying sheets and longjohns
 stretched between brick walls, spoken from
 eyes that also heard these human musics,
 saw the sky upside down in glinting water
 and just like you knew the motionless wings,
 soaring slow circles of the gulls.

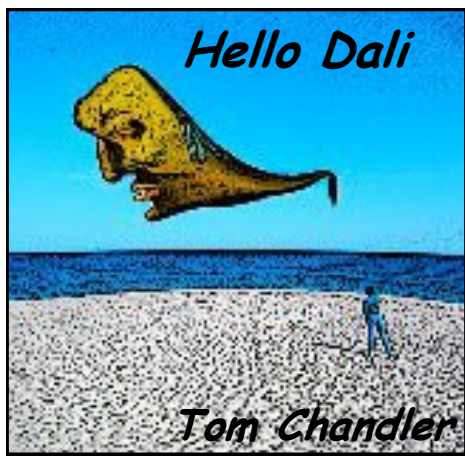
No need to draw Walt closer:
 he's planned for this all along,
 his yearning baffled curious brain
 as good as looking at you from 1856
 even as you read this, enjoying himself
 right now at the very thought of you.

6am Matins

Let the second hand stop
 repeating its little question,
 the bare wooden floor be
 cleanly swept, accept no feet
 stained with the world
 outside and let the knife lie
 quietly beside the unsliced loaf,
 the phone in its cradle
 sleep off the final conversation.

The only reason for time is
 to keep everything
 from happening at once
 and maintain the proper space
 between leaves, people,
 Wednesday and Thursday,
 the sun and wakening earth.

Time enough, great
 billowing pillows of it,
 to do everything later, languish
 like a sultan between the sheets,
 dreaming I am dreaming
 of nothing at all
 in all its sweet decay.



Please recycle to a friend!

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Origami Poetry Projects™

Credits

- "She Listened" – Harvard Review
- "How to Read Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"
 – The Briar Cliff Review
- "A Kind of Lincoln" – Rattle
- "6am Matins" – Roger
- "Karaoke Night" – The Evansville Review

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