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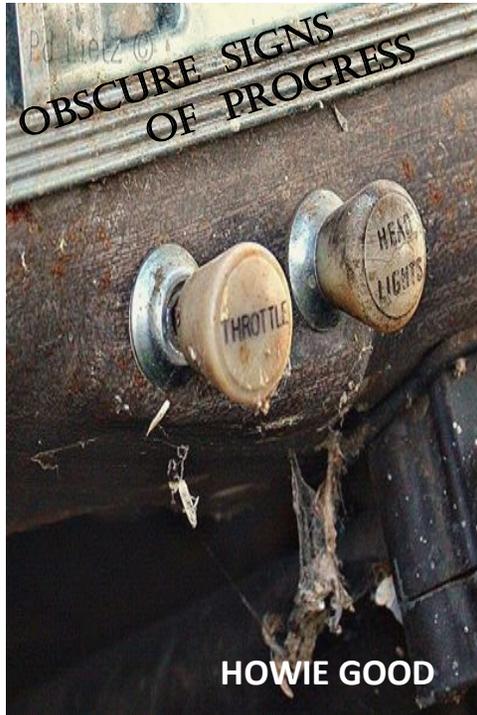
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Origami Poetry Project™

OBSCURE SIGNS OF PROGRESS

HOWIE GOOD © 2013



MUST BE GENETIC

Everything's online – guns and victims and suspects. Click a link. The turmoil is irresistible. Must be genetic. Language itself is a kind of treachery. Why perhaps a horse's ears quiver. I have been meaning to ask, What's it like to be the last fire engine in hell? Busy, probably. The son of man raises a warning finger before anyone can comment. I'm wise enough not to say what I think, but not wise enough not to think it.

GONE TO MEXICO

He vanished over the border. It's been a hundred years and still no trace. I'm waiting for you outside the Starbucks in Buzzards Bay. I could be waiting for him to stroll up, an English-Spanish dictionary under his arm. A woman at one of the sidewalk tables is talking on her cell about cutting everyone's hours. She's twenty-something and almost pretty. I watch the afternoon heat rise in waves from the blacktop. "It is what it is," the woman says. She glances at me and then away – not ashamed, just uninterested. Every day is a heart hooked up to a monitor, another cat shot with an arrow.

You're whichever tree, the beech tree or the silver birch, sheds its leaves first. Blood that should only flow out parts of your heart flows back in. There are no secrets allowed, and no do-overs either, a line of buildings in the distance like so many tall knives. If thoughts made a noise, the noise my thoughts made would be moderate to severe, the flap-flap-flap of winged skulls hunting insects in the dark.

DON'T DIE

The wind is out of focus. Soon you and everyone else related to me will begin to suffer the effects. The wind screams something about invisibility, spyware, a garden of beheaded flowers. It screams all night. In the morning, I sit at the kitchen table, unable to concentrate on what I'm reading. I listen in on the inane conversation of the birds at the feeder. There are tremors and a drooping sky. Juror No. 3 doesn't seem to like me. I call the emergency number. I'm the emergency.

AMBIENT NOISE

OBSCURE SIGNS OF PROGRESS

I can remember teaching you your colors – further proof, if anyone needs it, of the inutility of memory. We were all easier to love back then, before silence became the main means of communication. I glance over at you. You're still in your work clothes, the college dropout, dried teardrops of paint on your chin. One of your younger sisters calls us in her childish voice to come in for dinner, but we sit another little while on the porch in the growing dark, watching, as if by secret agreement, the drifting green sparks of the fireflies.

HOW TO BE HAPPY

A man watches from somewhere nearby. The existence of angels would constitute a violation of U.S. airspace. You had been hoping for a quiet night tonight and, in the morning, caves of brightness. The man shields his eyes. You're either a victim or a suspect. There's always a choice. Repeat after me, Love is death turned inside out.