

David Bankson

Together

The world fogged its lights
and draped gray in our eyes
like shuddering clouds
above a darksome land.

The day
heard the city awaken
and broken
as the land fractured apart from front to back,
the reflection in your eyes
gray catbirds deep in a shadowed forest.

I forgot
you walked these grounds before,
the clouds in your wake,
the shaky yesterdays
hungry for your smile,

a darkness for two,
the growing fog
and you,
before I happened along.

Before that,
candles fizzled
into a sulphur wisp.

After all this time
we're stumbling here,
where a milk-and-water past
tolls.

I remember
you glowed like a phantom:
your fog to my smoke,
your eclipse to my night,
a fulcrum for a world of tomorrows.

What's Left After Suicide

Lakes are nothing but the ground's failure
to rise above. We measure entry wounds
only once death is rooted into flesh and bone
and hasn't blown out the back.
Before the mind thinks its last -
a mountain just wide enough
to block what's left of a family.

My uncle is saying something
about memory and purity from beyond.
I don't remember what my cousin said
in his sleep about the suicide,
but it was a language
shared by the two of us.
Once life took us away, we forgot it all.

Body may not be the best word to describe a lake,
but it will do in this case.
Doubt may not float on water,
but what else to do with it but drown?
"Animal" doesn't mean apathetic,
and "Man" doesn't mean aesthetic.
The knob won't turn when I want to see inside.

In the fugue they say the sky
is a solid hue of blue.
I'm listening.
I'm listening as if the sky were singing,
not in memory, euphoria, story. More about
the deep lake that reflects the sky,
bracing body against the bitter cold.

Pathway

the stepping stones they say path
the way to my bed are bordered
by trees fixed & ordered
into lines of highway crosses

they ignite the dark of night

again dripping rain
fills the creek
& Spotify floods my mind
more every day

this overpass was an exit
path from towns
built for my kind
fleeing fires beneath
moon & martyr

I have all
that I need yet
I'm panicking

streetlights won't protect us

I press on
incapable of feeling
the corpses beneath my feet

Snowflakes

They separate
I claim their winter
A lifetime so plain
that the harness
slips
From my lap I
hunger for it, separating, from my plexus
snowflakes listening
A lifetime so wet
the tip freezes

What did my psyche
do before it collected seconds?
I have no memory

Like a clavicle
Like a pearl
Like a mistake

Here I am then,
a monk in supplication
Is this life, this absurd
groveling?

In fleetingness I
trespass, temporary
in salt, fateful
from fire

Tragic or characteristic
What could the land beneath me do
without the grip of my boot?

This ruby life has no snowflake saved for me
What does the snowflake
need without will to power?
I drift asleep for a moment, falling
into my mind, blind from winter glare
Is this experience then, learning to see?

Nag Champa

Stone bed -
the drifter's temple has collapsed.

haze-colored horizon
sodium-light galaxies

Is this homeland? What is my homeland?

The breeze smells of notions of folklore
methodical deviancy.
The party enveloped in incense
& elegance.

Intense nationalism &
dark lamps for everyone else.
Mumbai moans
Bengaluru melodizes.
New Delhi constantly howls.

Story Circle

Tell of darkness in a coal miner's heart,
balsam fir sapling surrounded by ancestors,

all the hearts of man expelling words
of warning. Say the house's roof

is a den of illicit activity. Invoke
empty stone wells & death masks,

cracked teeth, a sunset stained with wine.
As another night ruptures in the throat,

scream the primal truth--though stories
are honey, let us grasp the barbed wire tonight.

The Sound of Fire

My ears are tree leaves covered in lichen.

Or my leaves are not tree leaves but paper,
White with old White-Out, tucked into a notebook
Of poems.

Or my papers aren't papers;
Instead, they're paintings of antique pastiche.

They're as small as an anti-mélange.

In my tiny mind, the paintings don't seem to fit:
They're tall and somewhat unmoving
Like a revolution.

Like the hydrodam,
These things are blocked; and the right, with its faded
Sounds, is different than the left. (It wasn't long
Ago with infection, the eardrum scarred.)

Your ears hear what they want, a woman says.

Another says, your ears must be burning.

About the Poet

David Bankson lives in Texas. He was finalist in the 2017 Concis Pith of Prose and Poem contest, and his poetry and microfiction can be found in concis, (b)oink, {isacoustic*}, Artifact Nouveau, Riggwelter Press, Five 2 One Magazine, and others.