

by PAIGE TAGGART

This poem contains pertinent interaction between poetry and criticism, because it's a critical poem. A poem invested in stirring up problematic inquiry amongst more specifically, American poetry. As an American, writing American poems, I feel apprehensive about targeting a worldly associative context for such a poem. Such a poem arises out of my anxiety about writing poems that are personal, in times of war and strife. The process of writing poems is such a bodily cathartic experience for me, and this relief that happens helps me to function as a human being. At the same time however, I'm always worried about how they can be of use in the larger context, 'coexistence.' I think the poem is linked to criticism because it's calling into question the state of its being, and how it functions, as it's functioning. I never really know if a poem is successful in doing what I intend for it to do, but by creating some drilling, I'm hoping to form impressions. In everyday life there's experience, observation, and then reflection; these three components dialectically interact to surface a greater instinctive revelation, emotion and/or intuition. What guides us all? Do similar forces guide us all, or do we submit ourselves to a hierarchy that exhausts some possibilities and provokes others? Poetry has been the greatest medium for bringing together all interests in my own life. It's never ending there's no stopping point of what can be said, it's the one place in life where language can be exercised to the umpteenth degree. Certain aspects will be revealed and others disclosed, but it's obvious I'm not trying to paint a pretty picture. I know that by criticism it is meant the 'critiquing of,' as opposed to 'critical,' by means of harshness. Therefore, if this piece strikes some level of questioning or is subjected to being examined or makes astutely fantastical notions come to life, then it is a piece of art that opens itself up.

AMERICAN POETRY

American poetry has
chosen to ignore ugly
situations and the people of most
impossible scenario brink a depth
to write on with the tenacity of tear
gas or soldier's glued
eye sockets shedding tears
short
tears
long

strength

this Academia not broken by windows
no stepping through doors
just tents of time
a day at a time
it'll kill you
and as you die, I'll stretch chords
about as strong on violin
as strength puncturing the heart can deliver
if reprisals not enough try stepping out alive
from some shanty culprit of our mind's evolution or is it lacking
development smudged palms against broken glass
violence/knowledge

what constricted relationship?

these loose terms fit within parameters

plastic gloves

antibacterial sentiment

Red Cross rescues

amidst a green field

where wild cats tread

purports locale to make haste?

deteriorated cynicism likely
new panel of judges will exercise all means possible to end
America this is not the only world of wars
and words fought inside out, I place my sweater
over my head, this arbitrator must
 defeat, or grind pompous in a guillotine
all with rifles on a dock of shame, lower guns
and walk the line
committed crimes result in
 purgatory, say wars a religious war the worst kind of way
Yet, within a cusp I hold light
petite candle/vigil to purify extraneous falsehood
America's pretensions
take my fingers rest steady a flame
equitable matter is emitted outwards
in preclusive gap
sadness death starvation
fills in with coils of grain
if you take me here
I will go
And if I follow will you please
 match my armor

American poetry please do
not collapse into a digital inferno compacter, as I
 somersault down green valleys already whitewashed with a paint roller
I shampooed my hair
and had to make choices: sloshed or sober
Friday night this loose thought surveys/persuades my coccyx
bridged by base of truth deposit ruins there
intervene this debunked convention
I'm lost in obligation

pity for non-parallel conclusions
vexed on edge or
shimmer down the vastness of poetic problematic inquiry
towards white globes (voids) which rid special sorts
June only broils my skin so much before steeped pride becomes
numbers marching on potatoes in a field
lined up supposedly feeding young minds
remember me one more time
some sort telepathy as misdemeanor but let it bite you
quarter and a tucked in receipt transient on alphabet bus
receive me? saved for calories sake or drink up I fight gods
weary on home give gray hair a chance if we all come to it anyway
old is the way to be these days read once we're dead
tribute this with new newspaper and spare the elegiac paragraph
subsidiary or not I want my life to debase to this
age thing live me in a house high up a mountain
stairs to special, top view easy to recite
on typewriter tea down the throat
and shadows
and wind
and trees love on the cabinet peanuts in bed
I have so much to read and then falling asleep
like a disjointed promise continues allusions of words
forest gander again you can commit!
spoons inside drawers all fit together easy compartmentalizing
this rocked shape future
seaweed and soda crackers make living cells reproduce under the guise of
cellular dystrophy tangible in Newsweek or inbred up in Boonesville
kids play with lucky dimes the fountain water they drink is organized Temple
spare the elucidations of fasting brought on during cursive
channeling
Spring wolves can only laugh hard and hike meat

before day breaks and we're back to the online ridicule of:

my hands

my numbers

my shoes

I brought signature boots to the kick-off party of 'higher learning'

they taught skills remarkable training

relaxation and pom-pom parties on day's sought

sure it's easy but try organizing if for a change

come over to my place bring flowers and beer

charge all those coming through the door

close it really fast right in their silly faces

spare disjuncture bored by frequent schmoozing