

*from* The Year of the Rooster

He doesn't  
believe  
in the farm  
that he's sure  
he must have  
thought into  
being  
but believes  
in the thought  
being  
farm-like  
& thinks  
everything else  
unnecessary

Is dawn's  
willing spokesman

espousing himself  
in half-light

or is it  
the light's

half solicited  
by his simple rhetoric?

Moderate passion  
never pushed one to master  
the noose, to practice scales  
across scalding keys, weathering  
hothouse vigor with heavy grade  
weld-mesh wire around the  
henhouse's penning in  
of perpetual adoration

A biting monologue begins by keeping your mouth shut

Electro-legged spider crosses the page  
patterns a field patterned by need  
fielding its urgency into another tradeoff

Condensed captive phenomena  
triggering vacant description  
as if wallpaper were a starting point  
or martyrdom a made-up word

Is there no art ascribed to eating?  
Is this eating a reverence  
for original noise? Stunning reception hour?

I swear disasters happen everywhere

Meaningless day  
split in two

spurring nothing

Fuck if I launch my little boat

Dressed in grammar  
clamorous as a walk-on's  
wish for a few words  
a deadening idea  
marries itself  
to whatever I've been  
trying to get across:

fields, farms, the faraway certainty  
of affection for ritualized work  
when work's a camera-less close-up  
of everything I couldn't bother to include

I dream a stage  
& stand on it

Countess  
colonizer  
who else  
strolls on  
a ridge of  
holly & calls  
it difficult  
to imagine  
a more  
decorative  
holiday?

Trick's no longer to photograph the bullet:  
accelerated escapism rearviewed irony ages ago

I'll atone for the orbit I'm in  
for an inked hourglass, stupid sandcastle

O indoors you do me in so delicious, a week's worth of nature shows  
showing nothing of light catching our animals triumphantly ignoring us

Am I seeding or sunning myself, forfeiting  
a manual of dignities to feign composure?

Dream a stage & stand on it

Dream a page from the Book of Perfect Beginnings & claw it to confetti

Dream a hearse & crash it into the hospital

Dream yourself inside the egg  
inside the syringe's sterility  
inside a mannequin & then take off its clothes

Dream like an animal  
in gray tones, like a mammal  
in motherlyness, in public  
dream as purposeful as possible  
put on whatever's laid out  
& wedge yourself between  
waning fashion & a wonderful tan

Are you a photographer of staged mutations?

Yes, thank you

Would you take rust on that blue Volkswagen roadside as a conceit?

Yes, thank you

Draw a mannequin across the tile floor until one of its legs comes loose?

Yes, thank you

Call this momentary withdrawal a series  
of equations which thinking a perimeter makes?

Yes & thank you  
amid hurried blurs  
the day's become  
a mound of snow  
graying in the center  
of an otherwise vacant lot

Two seasons later  
it's the shell of a beetle  
baking in the sun

brittle in the sun

I watch over you because you need me

Forgive the systematic contortion  
of removals, from a coarseness comes  
a fiery magnetism, from an anxious dream  
an encroaching boredom

After four hours  
dawdling with the wardrobe, I leave furiously  
a city & its wintering sheen, remove  
the hens then those for whom  
the remaining space is responsible

Commodify me  
a pretty mess conjugation  
  Three shafts of grass  
    wanting notice  
      or noticing what  
    afternoon light  
      charges, exchanging  
      attentiveness  
    for dustbin  
  representation  
of dull mulchings  
  civility makes

Receding coastline, judicial waistline  
  Commercial fallout  
    battering the braincase  
    builds a husk  
  around actual things  
    between you & me  
  am I thinking this  
    fencepost this  
      flowerpot that  
      sad red bird

Decorous passivity binds me to the drawing room  
Wait an hour or two & Rooster appears

It's easy to erase him  
tending landscapes a rusting battery accentuates

A smidge of ambition  
becomes the wail of passing planes

trades drab courtship with an unfinished world  
for a box elder bug belly up on the counter

I prefer boredom & its subtle filigree  
working the ceiling into something memorable

Is it so wrong

to go on

playing arpeggios

to a tiny ballerina's wind-up dance

to sit around

& enumerate

the inner-life of an animal

truculent exultations aimed at self-deflation

Prognosis: music box repels the flocks

Dear boulevard  
scissored between  
    what passes by  
    & stationary  
accruals we call scenery  
I'll admit to having  
    no idea where I'm headed  
    Pressure to recount  
        the look of the road  
    or strange allures  
        of an accident  
            keeps gorging itself  
                fakes fluency  
            in punctured turbulence  
    an unconsumed thing  
        calls for  
        cultivates a poem  
full of orange cones  
    stopping zones

Redundant Theme Meter reads:

—:—:—UNABASHEDLY WIELDING IMAGINED LIFE—:—:—:—:—:—:—:—:—

Sometimes I like to put things in order  
like emancipation from idyllic entanglements

“red helicopter”

“real halo”

“rotten protagonist”

or simply a walk to the store made meaningful?

It's true  
escalator's going indefatigably up  
an irreducible mystique  
I'd readily accord it  
claiming baggage  
like everyone else  
so morning breaker  
chatty cavalier  
say how you got here

First a myth about expansion & contraction

Then a classically antique butterfly-shaped soul  
doubtful certainties ascribed to a child's memory  
of distance & boats, indifference  
contemplating indifference, a gangplanked idea  
gone to the fishes, everyday speculative sedation  
meant to knock us out of flowers  
painted on aluminum  
follow those for whom  
a little amateur novelty  
lets the thought percolate

Found incongruous  
with expanding logic  
or founded in congress  
with the inability  
of agreement  
to solve for its own  
variable constituents  
a definition of jurisprudence  
free from the mention of law  
a dead end ending in allegory  
dies in an alley obscured by snow  
so the only thing I did  
with the lesson of the lone gunman  
is shooting my mouth off  
(gored by temporal conditions  
or conditioned by temporal gore)  
meaning a new human absolved  
of culpability & a powder blue hat  
both torn from the world of contingencies  
where someone's knocked  
another rubbery nail in place  
pace from tragic midnight  
to tragic empirical joke  
stabbing a fork into the yoke

Is it sonorous  
this line in the sand that says  
majestic as a new dress  
I'm not naked anymore  
than divinity is  
a ground-up group photo  
of grade school nostalgia

Method is moment to moment  
grin to grimace  
acting out the urges  
converge into mirror image  
minor imago unconsciously idealized

Little id's leash: fully flesh tone & feathered

That don't sing  
for nothing dearie O dearie!

Tried getting silk socks around those claws?

No, I'd be a gorgeous truck driver  
egregious as any fencepost animal

Who asked you to name the presidents in order  
like utility's a thing to hang from your belt loop?

Brilliant new day in its entropic decay!

I just want to press my middle parts

(into art?)

last summer or late summer or some other...

Gimme gimme pelican architecture  
the shape of the forest not the forest  
happy ink's unabridging machine  
a bit of ivy slowing a yellow wall  
Things happen in lines, windows, flakes  
You pluck feathers every morning  
Other people have more diamonds, bigger diamonds  
Is that something Rooster would wear?

A grand denial  
or a horse-drawn carriage  
one pictures antiquity  
as one placates cognition  
whose epicenter  
is only a rough draft  
of all the possible exits  
he argues exist  
something  
like a blue jay  
pushing past the window  
an obvious way out  
unwinding thinking thread  
in favor of the luster  
a pastoral flash elicits  
what original isn't  
a received idea  
equals two  
birds like this poem

Elsewhere  
three roses  
in a green pail  
on an island  
between passing cars  
suspended  
earthy  
gray-backed  
pink clouds

Elsewhere the problem is ubiquitous fiction

On the dash, a bottle & its baby ship  
One wants to touch tiny sails  
a spider rigged to the glass  
pick from among dead flowers  
a perfect model for one's point

A shooting position's a shooting position

Ask, interpreter of oracular pronouncements, ask  
for exuberance I won't name your flowering  
hate a simple ego, ask how many voices  
raise a choir, I mean this is measuring  
not pageantry, dear sweet silly blind Rooster  
who can walk so inflated loving it, ask  
if accosting one's image is dangerous  
considering the kaleidoscope  
is a still picture of earth enough?

Stuff his romantic notion  
rifling in a new day & its transient, watchtower seismology

“Your penis-tucked-between-the-legs pose  
isn’t fooling anyone,” says the Rooster  
conspicuously to himself in my shadow

He wants me to pee on the page  
to keep other people out, but  
I’m not so territorial making art salute  
autonomous castration, an ethics fitted for Levis  
while I go on with my emergency  
gluing macaroni to a paper plate

Who thinks harder  
wants an elastic god  
to bronze the cul-de-sac  
for a wage, skipping pebbles  
underneath  
the image generator  
honing in useful neglect

So just stop & listen  
& stop & listen  
you can hear it  
banging out dutifully

A rack of folding chairs flares dull florescence  
of a school-dimmed mind into the possible order  
of an un-peopled, re-peopled (no steeple!) republic  
atop the waning afternoon, the castled, crossed-out  
Xed-over could have afternoon & its nothing brigade  
its nominal, normal neo-nonconformist fist in hazy air

It's not violent to punch yourself full of opposable thumb envy  
If only I didn't—if he/she didn't—have to be still to stall it—  
the dripping (stalactite or stalagmite?—I forget) dipping  
thought barometer affixed to this diorama of  
Plato's Cave via plowed fields of a non-allegorical Animal Farm  
in which the pecking order says stop all the bullying,  
bookstores aren't erotic, collect the eggs & be off  
Yes, sometimes all a stone does is eating

A tree in his mouth's a broken telephone  
where I'm always talking aren't I  
willing this regression a parenthetical stickhouse  
to keep warm, burning the foundation  
& balking at his coterie of hatchling cinders

Remove the irony actual animals in your life inculcate

Now that's an unobtrusive command  
coming from a creature insulated by its own plumage

Sorry, but coloring your nouns ain't  
an erudite extrapolation of identity

What we want is real motion  
not cluck cluck clucking machines  
cantilevered by fraudulent dexterity  
a backdrop of changing seasons  
tracing digressive moves  
of a make-believe bird  
brings to the single act  
exiting Rooster stage righteously

Score this dismantled

    busy busy mountain

masticates dimestore largesse

Goodbye training wheels  
gentle thinking jarred

I blame driveways, withered oaks  
the dented shaft of a streetlamp

Weather reports

what the wind does

is ruin



Someone wants  
pent aggression  
penning him in  
I don't say this  
without action  
an observer's  
self-indulgence  
inflating optimist  
tendencies  
with a tentacle  
in every pie  
just want for once  
my own meal  
uncorked & kept warm  
carrying on mocking  
masquerading her heroic  
gas station theatrics  
for the rest of your life  
you get to be an adult  
trying to reconstitute  
the age of the egg  
& worried worried  
worried about brittle  
vanity inflaming  
neighboring secondary  
notions of the right way  
to walk a street unclouded  
by clingy defeatist airs

Two things Roo can tell you:

Mirrors & money run  
on the same circuit

Girl's an adverb gardening  
abstract masters love

I don't mind needing  
a conductor, what I mind  
is the conductor's need  
when the fox finally  
makes its way into the poem  
or when finality comes like a fox  
to the poem at last  
or when the poem finally  
outfoxes itself, plans unfolding  
in their perfection like a recipe  
followed in every golden detail  
a meal one dare not touch  
going from warm to frigid  
in the span of a thought  
followed to its outermost  
only to crumble in on itself

then who's a me that the him that's she singing bashful  
diction beside yourself with yourself a selfless personification  
I as I & she as me & him as she ill-gotten girly machismo  
unmasks Rooster reluctantly pacing a private identity  
overhauling her over him who's both me & she & he  
hearing perfect harmony pitched from sexual organs  
you cum she cum he cum we in reverie a sum of you  
& him & she & me something to add to Rooster's ledger  
letting go groundless disinterest for desirous territory  
marking notches makes feigning fright a come-on for  
you & he who's him is she & me but you are you & me  
& him & she & Rooster uneasy thinks guard duty's  
a dead end ending in allegory where he's a she performing  
his womanhood in manly dress to make dawn another mess

She doesn't  
believe  
in the he  
that she's sure  
we must have  
thought into  
being  
but believes  
in the thought  
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just like us  
& thinks  
everything else  
unnecessary