



COURTESY: BENTLEY

John F. Buckley

Two

Sales Pitch

As if you haven't noticed, my hair today looks exceptional, and my breath is mintier than a urinal cake, and my dapper suit hangs off me, clings to me in all the right places, like a red leather boa or the arm of a runcible escort. It truly is time to set aside qualms, dive in, and agree to the purchase. Picture the pie-faces of your neighbors as you bring it home, their beaks dipping down and up unremittingly, like a flock of hollow glass birds filled with mercury. They would sacrifice their children, even the secret favorite, for such an opportunity. They would shriek behind curtains until craving uvulas split into clusters of grapes, hoping for the chance only you've been given. Given by me, who wants nothing else but your happiness, who wants but the slimmest of commissions. Imagine what you will envision within the parameters of

the product's guidelines. Shy away from
the weight of the wallet, a leaden vulva,
a no-win no-way zone I can wrest from you
in your own best interest. Let me take the yoke
off your shoulders, the grit from your smile,
the shit from the shoetread, and sprinkle
a pocketful of mercantile insouciance
to speed the way to a sleeker, more fanciful
more rainbowcentric tomorrow. Buy it. Buy it now.

Scene From Their Lives

Do you remember our excellent tennis-white brunch on the patio or balcony, fresh-squeezed orange juice or bloody Marys in hand, warm croissant slathered with jam on our plates, papers laid out for the signing, the transfer of ownership of companies or yachts or chalets or trophy wives? It was just before Muffy or Serge or Taylor returned from the cape or the coast or the island, sunburned or tanned, relieved to have escaped the tedium or melodrama or crushing responsibility for a weekend, a fortnight, an afternoon. Up the driveway she or he came in the Ferrari or Bentley or special-edition Mercedes, the one with the waggedy tail. Suddenly, the hostile conversation occurred, the one marked by shouting or awkward silences or poisonous surface pleasantries, the one prompting me to excuse myself to the garden or library or stable. It was awkward being an outsider. It was awkward being on the outskirts of the inner circle, albeit more inside than ninety-nine percent of the population, the people out there, the people without options, the people outside the circle, the People. I lit a custom-made cigarette or Cuban cigar, or wished that I smoked. I looked around, vacuous or contemplative or actually pensive: someday, this would all be, if not mine, then one of a very few other people's.

John F. Buckley has published "in a number of places." A piece by him was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2009. *Poets' Guide to America*, written in collaboration with Martin Ott, was published in the summer of 2012.