



Image from Poetry Foundation

normal

to ginsberg, apollinaire, bob kaufman

-- a few of the great ones

-- a few of my teachers

white page

this

this white

white page this poem this minute this fracture in time
oh splinter off the hardwood of reality speaks whispers
torments seduces comes at times unexpected uninvited
least wanted it comes like a life all before me on this
page like an orphaned child finds a way to claim its own
bristle of meat torn from the bone oh lover oh power
a mirror a ganglia a landlord of pariah a golgotha of ghosts
this old corpse this young oak oh sunrise of squawking revelry

oh volcano of spewed flamingoes an amethyst a headstone a
taproot a dazzling an examination of dried prostates this
flaming forest of metaphors a frozen temple of wilderness this
ship of uncountable harbors

this

this white

this white page this messiah this judah this blazing dada
this grinning-faced ol' reaper a branding a pitchfork a
single word which wakes me broken silence like a horseman
whose axe-blow beheads me

on this page

this crosshair trigger cannon missile which holds me a
dybbuk a golem a leprechaun a metronome which rhymes me
a commingling a linkage this collision which flashes all
before me

on this page this moment
this wooer this priest muse reviver necromancer

disappearing before me slowly

*

i went to the museum

to watch the terracotta soldiers
to watch the fashion show of the long-forgotten
to watch the mississippi steamboat, the glass cases
of ringmaster whips & royals wedding tiaras

i went to the museum
with its legacy of sealed mausoleums & ageless slaves
with its totems of jackals squatting on the ruins
where fallen emperors pleaded one more chance from the grave
where heroes rose with crazy eyes from the stones
& strands of bloodied turquoise circled the globe

i went to the museum

carrying a brown lunchbag of baby carrots & hummus thru
the re-constructed streets of babylon & baal
to walk the corridors of penitentiary hall with its
interactive exhibits of torture chambers & knotted nooses
to witness the birthing rooms of culture, fierce as starved tigers
the torn caps of failed uprisings & revolutions
the flags of freedom, carried upon rockets, hidden behind shawls

i went to the museum
to watch dark age & renaissance blink their lights off & on
to gaze upon black & white photographs of the beach
where the last starfish once lay
to behold the place where the elephants of india once passed
to see atlas carry an atom bomb on his head
& follow the fossilized footsteps of marching armies
thru the new dawn of fresh mud

to stand among the tourists with my cavemans suitcase in one hand
i went to the museum

*

“in the wind
time walks”
-- nanao sakaki --

comfort station

1

i am building soft nets for death
by pounding poems into the void
feeling much i suppose like a carpenter
with the understanding that
his nails will outlast his bones.

2

as an old man i'll find myself
walking along the river considering
the same goddamned garbage &
dead carp drifting by as it did

when i was very young.
in spite of myself
there is comfort to be found
in the few remaining things
that are too stubborn to change.

3

the chitter of morning birds
it is early, barely sunlit.
the earth for the moment
perfect. soon man
will waken.

4

this footnote to my personal history says
this morning
my pen passed over this white piece of paper
which at first looked like fresh fallen snow.
then came my inky footprints. they wandered
off into the distance.

5

i have yet to use a computer
i am a dying breed
i take limited solace
in this small &
insignificant victory.

normal has been called “one of the last American primitives” in the underground press. His most recent book, *i see hungers children, selected poems 1962–2012*, was published by LummoX Press in 2012.