

Almost over Angst

A portfolio of poetry by Joe Brown.

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Autofocus

Look at me now.
Act with intelligence.
Touch but do not
let your hand slip.

Act with intelligence,
give up your pride.
Let your hand slip!
See what you've done?

Give up your pride
I will show you how to
see what you've done.
An entropic disaster.

I will show you how to
touch, but do naught.
An entropic disaster;
watch yourself fall together.

Blueprints for ballasters

If inks were I-beams, I would draw a bridge;
from here to mount olympus' highest ridge.
but as it stands, the only iron'd ink
is dripping from my hands into this sink.

My mother said I'd be an architect,
but death is never kind to dialect.
in time we bury all words in coal dust.
the furnace of the mind burns on. It must.

Now from the iron ink that fills my veins,
and carbon from the memories' remains,
I'm smelting mighty ballasters of steel.
To keep me firmly grounded in what's real.

If inks were I-beams, we would surely die;
from pens in pockets vaulting through the sky.

Always too Close

If you continue to pick at your nails,
you are going to rip them off
the throbbing pain in the bare stubs,
the reminder of the disfigurement
of your elegant fingertips.

I am very tired of living for now.
My vision has become lethargic.
I can feel the time between
my command to move my eyes
and the change of scenery.

Yet all of this is still not real.
Keys under my fingertips,
a misplaced stroke is the key to sunder
my connection with the computer
really in front of me.

My eyes track up, slowly.
I know this is a sign of creation.
"Down to remember,
straight to see,
up to use both for novelty."

I want to grab you by the collar,
you the reader,
and thrust you into the wall at arm's length
and slam you until you realise
that I am not real, simply words and bones.

But instead you will realize that I am insane,
my gesture inane,
typos, my right brain.
My form is mundane
and inconsistent.

The only real I have to offer you,
you the reader, is to remember that
'look around and appreciate'
is not just ink on paper
or ascii on liquid crystal.

These words are here to remind you that real
is wherever you are,
and to remind you that words can take you away
fROm whaT yYou wNANT tO bE.
So just stop reading.

Dark Rainbow

Thin darkness makes mute colors bloom,
light can't take with, thick pigments stick.
So I strike a match and drop the sulferous plume,
I smirk to see four walls of molding brick.
At myself, for the beauties, I did assume;

a match's light would show, foreseen.
A glimmer on dark rainbow's sheen.

Lossy Compression

Did your mother die?
or did she melt into the music
that was her life, regardless
of you, there was a lot

she would have fixed,
if she could have
anything, it would be you
knowing her love unconditional.

But it's not shade she loved,
the music carries her now
as it always did. Melodies wring
what silence lays flat.

It only takes a whiff of an instant
of knowing, for absolute certain-
ty, that the music is over.
Silence in every measure left.

Now, it only takes a silent second.
but you'll never drop the baton.
You are silenced by hope and fear,
what if the music unconditional fills the shade?

How stupid you would look then,
control dropped on the floor,
notes sloughing off the orchestra,
a sloppy, lossy flood.

Love and Shove

You've pushed me far and pushed me hard.

"Who told you it was meant to be
that everything could be regard-
ed as part of harmony?"

Oh, how were we supposed to love
(those silken streams on willow trees)
in all the scattered lightning of
a mirror shattered; "just go, please."

No love can be more sharp, when she,
who told you love was meant to be,
loved *at* you by the willow tree,
but you can only say "sorry".

Our likenesses reproach my stay,
I sweep them up, must get away
but see your eyes, and feel you say
"who told you life would be okay?"

"You did". And it was not a lie.
The willow's flowers still draw my eye.
Our love may die, and so may I,
and though I wish I might defy
all fears, whelming, that draw my cry,
Those silken streams will never dry.

Mother of Rainbows

A droplet of water yearns towards the earth.
Sunlight gleams through the rippling sphere,
impregnating the sweet silent body with light;
a gentle touch from across the universe.

Refraction slows the warmth,
hugging the rays as they swirl.
Reflections within condense the embrace,
rippling heart now a droplet of sunshine.

Mother water cannot hold her heart forever.
Intimacy that splits white into children,
wistfully releases each color in turn,
Seven children grow up to fill the sky .

Naturalized Selection

I saw a girl who carried on her bike,
a pair of crutches so that she could walk.
the cast that's on her leg so armor-like,
a mess of fibres rigidized with caulk.

She moved so fluid on her set of wheels,
her legs for walking loosely in her hand.
you'd never think that in one of her heels,
was broken bone that made it hard to stand.

In such a weakened-looking mighty state,
we find ourselves abetted by machines.
To hurt ourselves in ways God can't abate,
and stretch ourselves so far beyond our genes.

We're not just getting older anymore,
incurring wrath that We can answer for.

One Way

Who am I
to always decry
genuine words that place me high-
er than the rest?

But who so small
could see me tall
that they should call
me great.

You ask, who am I
to, your love, deny?
Well, love made me arbiter of the lie
of what you see.

And who are you
to cut straight through
and make a path for love anew
in a swamp I can't traverse.

Player 2

In vibrance of the wizard is the sheen
of every dream and plan of mine for now
a moment's question is nothing but mean.
The wizard's splendor does all things allow.

And every dream and plan of mine for now
I see no reason to myself apply.
The wizard's splendor does all things allow
so doer of my acts needn't be I.

I see no reason to myself apply
did God not play us all into his game?
The doer of my works will not be I
If I've offended and will be aflame.

The splendor of the sun I'm forced to see
reminder of the God I'll never be
The vibrance of the wizard is so mean
it blinds me from the hope I would have seen.

Real

To the novice reader,
I am writing to you.
Stop reading immediately.
I am not fucking around.
The following ideas are a sandpaper
that only the calloused can masturbate with.
And you, novice reader,
don't want scabs there.

To the practiced reader,
I am blowing a bottle,
to place this note inside,
I'll let the glass cool,
so the words don't ignite.
but the note and the bottle,
are going to sea,
for only you to see;
practiced reader,
I am tired from writing to you
and tired of writing for you.
If I have nothing beautiful to say,
perhaps I should say nothing at all.

But silent is not how the story goes,
I, the mute musician, am bellowing a pitch,
and you, the practiced reader,
let the shrill sand fill your ears, for perhaps,
you can shake into your pillowcase,
and bring the heavy mess over to a furnace,
where you can blow it into a bottle,
and put a little note inside,
just for readers, an instruction manual.

"One glass bottle:

Bottle may be cherished,
and/or eventually converted
into sand, through application
of repeated force. Sand should be
deposited into ears
of PRACTICED READERS ONLY.
No refunds will be paid.
Repeated force not included."

If you want to see something real,
congratulations! You have no choice.
If you want to see something beautiful,
Take your eyes from this paper or monitor,
and look at the all the things around you,
just waiting to be cherished
and/or eventually converted into sand,
for the blowing of bottles,
or perhaps some sandpaper.

Stealing from Gray

I relish the feeling of scratches and bruises;
that deep ache and topical bite.
yellows and blues that will heal healthy pink,
reds and purples that grow up to be scars.

What I fear is the feeling of weakness.
Black fatigue comes with a pulled tendon
or the flu of a hangover,
this fades to gray.

But my cuts and bruises, they remind me I'm healing.
Living as part of an unrelenting optimism.
I am part of a messy mass of machinery,
reducing local entropy

while I sleep more soundly
than usual because I pushed
and damaged myself
just a little bit.

To remind me that I'm not
just dying here for eighty years.
And every breath I take
I take, defiant of gray.

Gray can't take me alive, and so I remind
myself that I am always healing,
always stealing.
And always in love with it.

Seeker of Truth

Hope is petty, a shield,
a tiny truth-proof bubble,
freeing us to hide ourselves,
from the infinite purview of truth.

But it does not matter if hope is a lie,
for what good can be of knowing truth
if the truth is knowing all is lost.
Hope gives us the courage to know love.

And though love may not be truer than gravity and entropy,
knowing love is sometimes greater than knowing reality.

Shrapnel on the wing

My fingers slacken, loose into the flames,
a canister of warning-grade propane.
The tense but giddy pressure a propos;
container ripe, with trillions' bouncing needs.
I wade-run through my shadow steeped in glow
to join it in the audience of just
too far away to fear buckling of steel,
but only just, eager to feel the burst.

I see a steadfast crow out on a tree
much closer than the stretch of danger's arm.
I shout as tiny jets of flame spring forth
in merry little jigs, towards sixteen bars.
I plead, "Just fucking fly, you're gonna die."
while melody crescendos to a craze.
The bird remains, and we reach bar sixteen.
The flower of fire bloom-bursts elegantly.

And shrapnel, as the crow flies, pierces me.