

Thoughts At a One Year Reunion

Carl Hatch

End of Purdue Ave

kids at the courthouse
clear stairs on boards,
steps no one climbs
but them.

a derelict place,
no laws practiced.
only smirks and
the music of getting hurt.

anyone else would
tear the place down.
but these kids,
they litter here

their smoke flirting with leaves
and the trees can't help but spill
from high onto themselves
and over the ground,

when it's too hot for fun
the concrete sees the mess
and cries wax.

Post-Eighth Grade Science

Some of the old Fidler crew
cast lines into oil-slick puddles
to see which colors lie
beneath rainbows—
eighth-grade science class
proved stimulating for once,
like the laboratory
when they examined light.

Runoff is unsanitary but ignored,
each imagines his version
of pulling up the first
three-eyed magenta fish
from the parking lot reservoir
where everyone in Los Altos
used to play tag.

One dives in head first
needing to cool off,
another leaves with a lie
about getting bait money,
hopes it won't come up later.

The rule about not letting hooks
go past a certain depth
after big Robby pulled up
an inky thing that sprayed him
with colors he couldn't handle
goes unspoken.

As they talk about any Friday night
no one notices how they all overlooked
the line in the book
that there's more to light
than the visible spectrum.

Invisible kid at the far edge
lets his line down indifferent,
past Robby's point—
until it's caught
in the rocks and weeds.

Two Hours Until Closing

Busboy, bartender: my middle men
for the best game of pool
this side of Willow
and the wife at her sis's... szz.
heh.

The busboy is the best,
if I send my tab through him
and around bartender Bill
I might not get

cut off.
Tipped him ten on thirty last time
if I can recall correctly
he's stocking the fridge now
he'll be back.
I'll wait it out to tell him
if something happened today.

—Well in the meantime
gimme cig ashes on the side for the slack image
pretty poster Corona lady,
my landlord doesn't know anything, he's strutting
in his jeans with the rent from 511.
How come the other guys like me can
sit family style and write books and be
red faced midnight monarchs while—

He got off early?

*Yeah, said he's hanging out
with a friend.*

Damnit, I get dry urinal cake dessert
even on my day off.

Between Hay Harvests

the three can sleep
like nobody's business,
 except
the middle one managing
to climb out without waking
the other two
look out the window
at the trailer tracks
in hay-clumped dirt, wonder
why this cold field in the valley
when there's things to shoot
at home

come sunrise he'll show
the birds who's boss,
he's the best shot
says grandpa.
guns safe but

loaded. his secret is that
he doesn't have to breathe
or lose focus cause
something stole the
breath right
outta him
a while ago.

 but that stays
 on this side of the
 vineyard.

the fetching dogs asleep
under the spell of
the still sunken sun.
but who needs them
when you're a kid
wielding
the firearm of
not needing
coffee
during mornings
unstopped by

cold lines
of grapes
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Snap

the longest talks with my brother aren't in meadows
or on photo risen precipices that overlook
tree branch barbershop quartets singing
the wind they think we want to hear.

cell signal scampers, a phone cord snaps,
afraid of what we'll say.

the song we try to play together
but haven't yet, dissipates into
guitar string theory.

we shared the shirts we're wearing now,
before he left to see how other trees
turn their leaves. our talks are longest
in bad lighting, midnight calls aren't
polished performances—

nothing noteworthy about hearing him
stress while my face steams above
reheated college kitchen leftovers.

And the Newspaper Didn't Even Come

across the street on Monday
neighbor Ron gets a ticket for parking
as I walk down the street a bit for parking

in the morning Ron walks his dog,
lets it take a dump,
he doesn't bring a bag,
for apparently,
parking his dog
on other people's lawns
for it to do its business
seems to work for Ron.

birds in trees they don't belong in
rocks outside of their beds
Ron outside of his bed,
go to sleep Ron

girl in the apartment next door to mine
leaves with her lover,
who spent the night
outside
her own
bed.

the sidewalks here are big gray boxes
with no cracks to pick at
and find something cool.

I moved here: no metro here.
well, bad metro here, so why—

I own a car now, cause
who puts faith
in the bus system,
not me.

I'll go to bed—
a spot opened up.

You Have A Neighbor Y'Know

Double paned glass
 has just the space inside,
splinters the sound
until it's just me
and my bunker music.

 A high hum
 so all I need to worry
 is how the L.A. Kings are doing.

Grass trashed outside
when it's been winter dead
since June.

I could tell the cranes overhead
that conspire against me
to move the couch
the people it invited left outside.
It doesn't have to be there forever—
but my mouth shoots slap shots.

The record's always spinning,
grooves so deep
they could
lower me
in. Love
when the T.V
takes a solo
with blues changes.