

/ Ron Silliman

from **Now, Here, This: Half-Sonnets**

LI

Morning idles in. A damp scoop in the oatmeal. As if I understood the microwave (lucky to understand the spoon). The malicious act of cleaning up. Waves beneath the surface of the coffee. My wrist unencumbered by a watch (the last generation to wear watches). A shoelace factory set to close. Amount of moisture held in the air at any given moment. The sun itself triggers the rain.

Dream of table duty at a conference. Try in Germany not to think of genocide (try in Lenapehoking). Talking electronic duck. Volcanoes of Io. Liturgy of the hours. Horse latitudes. The fascists back in Rome. Ray Charles slowing the intonation. Red dirt blues.

Light before sun. Lens before locus. *Moto proprio*, every word. My brother chose belief. Christ was never a Xtian. Dark armies. When they arrived at our door in Lucca, 1280, they lit the way with torches. Moment at which, far earlier, we were all brothers. Call me Oppy. The Knickerbockers vs. the Young Americans. The first of Edgar Poe's two graves. Nobody ever called you Lee Harvey.

Erose arose (insert toes). Running barefoot down wooden stairs. The microwave door. Everything in the master bath stretches from off-white to pale grey, so red-and-blue fish, large and intense on the shower curtain, screams *out of place*. They are discussing film while having sex. You can tell where the pocket had been stitched.

Cold americano in a shot glass. I dream of sensation in my fingers. The grass is brittle. Watch for the porch pirates. Lean back in the dental chair. Senior hour at the super mart. What key, what key?

Something in the dream felt erotic, but, waking, he could not remember what. That long word like a boat bobbing in the waves on every e. Language is/is not music. The Giants in for a long rebuild. What if a poem were a bitcoin? Removing his hearing aids was like dropping into the deep end of the pool, trying to fathom conversations on the deck from there.

Moon-ridden night sky. Ceravolo's typo: moon vs. noon, wch one? The year we lost Peter, Michael, Bernadette. I construct myself each morning in the mirror. One hears one's own voice through bone. Sentence vs. line, one hears the grind. My hand instead of an onion. Old shoebox full of refills for pens I no longer own. I sauntered into the stationery shop next to Zabar's. Up aways from Needle Park. A photograph of Emma in the south of France, sitting on my lap.

LII

Jingle: Sweet creams are made of this... Sentences I meant to write down. My wife singing a wordless song as she comes out of the mud room, my son whistling as he reads. I think of David Melnick. Tom keeping his father's passport, dark red J stamped over the very first page. Her father's produce truck slowly navigating the streets of Milwaukee. Nellie McMahon never marries, though for a while she uses the prefix Mrs. What I know about dry wheat farming.

Lee Atwater and Newt Gingrich realize that democracy plus demographics will doom the GOP, ergo.... Sometimes a period and then sometime not. He stared at the tall blue mug of water, assessing it to be half full. My pronouns.

Ball of the left foot numb. Her hand on my thigh, looking directly into my eyes. Pushed by a schizophrenic into the path of the train. I turn the temperature up two degrees. A memory of intimacy. The instant she asked I knew I had a secret that I did not want. Ralph shouts from the deck that the hot tub is ready. The basement lit up in an otherwise darkened house. Where in the wall is the poem?

Flame and smoke envelope the jeep before we sense the concussion. When I wake, your side of the bed is empty. Try to imagine light. A tall mug full of yesterday's coffee. She wanted to show me that she had learned finally how to give a blow job and I thought not to ask where. What if I ranked every room by the quality of light. They had painted the bedroom black. From the porch I could hear the Rolling Stones, playing at the stadium at the far end of the valley. Cardiac Hill.

He rubs his hands together but why is less certain. Would anyone recognize her on the tape? Three food trucks in a row. Now they discuss grandchildren. Dull sun, bare sky.'

I found my thrill, Stu Miller blowing in the wind. With typing instead of writing, the nails get involved. Lugging my grandfather's typewriter to the kitchen table after everyone else has retired to the television at the far end of a small house. A through line if you just follow it. My mother's copy of The Decameron with explicit wood cuts hidden at the bottom of her dresser. Dean Rusk on the back porch. The men inside rarely saw the yellow outer walls with which San Quentin presented itself to the world. I still recall the ferry.

Robot sisters. Olson never wrote of his duties in the OSS. QR code in the poem. Torn envelope placed atop the lidded waste basket. Her head. The shape of an ear. I have friends there, so I worry.

## **Coda**

Red hoody's slogan: Will write for food. Dense fog advisory. Dark Sky's final night. That it can't happen here though it already has. My hand trembles, which is history. What became of Gertrude Cabral who taught me to read? Falling from the mast, my great grandfather set so much in motion.

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