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Six Poems

Nicholas James Whittington

SECONDS / AVERAGES

I.

lately averring names
like luddites in the avenues
the traffic unmoving around us

we lie for a range of arrows
feathered angrily capped

hurried not w/ our wreaths
own rose or evergreen
eliding eyes

red-winged blackghosts'
reedy overnight tones

craftsman bones
jackal-watered verses
ambivalence

II.

neoclassical
mummers

duck poems
bum apples

& cigarettes
& bombs

bob hare-lipped
over barrels of shells

shellacked like the night forth

you of july & all summers' channels

swim up damnation

like diatonic scales of angels' feet

rattling beware
the gin works double-time forenoon

III.

tried true dadaring reaching for gold
pulling the gums of anubial clowns

half-anum aftermath of polical scilence
in these severanced islands of oakland

the chain-link of weak nights
& byways gone underfoot

ravens in the woodshed
herons in the quartz room

time on our quivering lips
so tensed in retrospect

this calm

IV.

clamming up & climbing palms
for the vantage the visage
of another other wave wavering
ringing ingots ghosts of guttersnipes
snipers & the lines that hold them
compelled from shore to shore
come hell & high water both
the oath abiding under tongue
like a junky snookered
in the umpteenth ward
june teeth all rooted out
a rotten sun between twin bulls
horns & a quarter dwindled
down to dimes & nothing
less these last two cents

half a man & half again
nor bull nor horse nor goat
sheep too easy to founder
shorn of all was ever sworn

from PROVISIONS, Winter 2015

•

appended to the end of another tongue
the folk fragments of song
not lost upon the rest
among them the rest tho it stretch
on interminably internally intended
 in the beginning of every one

•

enabled by special dispensation
of chance
to remain
 in the pastoral city
 w/ views of the hills
year end
smoke
curling & the sun mirrored thru it
 from select well
 angled windows
afraid
that in leaving

one might be disestablished
disabled
from ever coming
back

one

never does

stays ever more

estranged

from what one has left

BAFFLE OF THE SCENE

not invisible but missing
misshapen ghosted gnawed
gnarled at hand the moment
w/ all its prefaces & postmarks
remarked over three-course meals
several families of four or more
mistakes cornered brown-bagged
i went to three grocery stores today
one twice & only then did buy
the dime bag for charity

but i didn't
go that last time my wife went alone
i don't know what she did

CITY PLANNING

to plot two plots squared
filled in w/ chain-link fencing
in rolls piled pyramidally mirroring
all the metal that well shone self

urbane jumble of numbers
littered w/ letters past due
a redemption value less wry
unrhymed skew promenades

intersections condemned
a scaffold built around the center air
in anticipation of tearing down
what hasn't yet been raised

AESOP'S ESCAPE

knowing littered w/ mandrake

bark as birds drop from the bulging

grey underbelly of skies

scaly seas

mirror the surety plaguing isles

the cough that never goes away but seeps

ever deeper more subtly in

we gather & speak small

cry out laughing

cough & speak small

game gamed & gaining

at the edge of our existence

our instinct

imbued w/ whatever color of law

collars us

stunned into quiet

by the racking cough

"THE MIND IS ANGROGENOUS"

the breaking of nations as the breaking
of bread the breaking of the waves
nearing shore
 crust edge of what binds
the bounds the sounds & shapes lines
to be stood on or in depending on
which side you stand
 where drawn
under what circumstance what
difference our manner of speaking
of not speaking the distances
 unchanged
elastic tongues antinomian suddenness
a sudden sameness
 we call ourselves
& it all falls together
in that coheres we here together
hearing the sound mind's remedy
 a glance back
over real resistance of what's gone

what might come next is now
the force
that shall leave form a wake
upon the waters a way from shore

About the author

Nicholas James Whittington was born and raised in the City of San Francisco, where he edits *AMERARCANA: A Bird & Beckett Review*. He currently lives in Oakland, having also done time in Santa Cruz, San Diego and Siena, Italy.