Poems

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Poems

Abstract
CHESTNUT, CLEAN BREAK, THAT WORD
It didn't have to come out.
It could have stayed as a dull obstruction behind my sternum,
a globule of pain and purpose,
helping give form to the weak mists of my body,
and at the end, nibbled bare by time. But instead

I pushed it out.

I wanted it to be a burnished silver ball, blithe and powerful,
perfectly formed and compelling,
lustrous and valuable. But instead

It was a common old cracked-glass tombola,
rough, chestnut-shaped,
sad and heartfelt, dull and unappetising.

I wanted it to alight smoothly from my lips,
both question and answer,
a handsome fait accompli. But instead

It caught in my throat,
I gagged, and it surged into my lap.
I turned to catch it, but fumbled;

I tried to cover it over and make little of it -
doing so was like crushing a naughty pet underfoot, like
burning a poem because of a glimpsed frown;

I shuffled it lightly away with my toe, skimmed it into the redbrown
shadows -
doing so was like dropping a thousand dollars on the street and being
too glum and flustered to pick it up again.

It may have been the best part of me,
it could have been -
this dumb thing from inside my chest,
But I disowned it in a rush of agony and liberation, shame and transcendence, soul's preservation, heart's incineration.

The pressure released, my body flooded with toxins. I trembled with ghastly cold, for a while may have died. But instead I lived - and now, dusty, dry, almost invisible, I convalesce. And I find high comfort in remaking myself, growing towards the last and greatest human goal, The end of hope.

CLEAN BREAK

She should have known it was over, That it had to be finished, at That moment, right here. It must have been clear, From the second I took My position - a stance That, surely, heralded What was To come

There was a momentary shock, I couldn't just release her, or Easily let her drop. I would Have to push. Lean Forward, then Push carefully, Delicately.

So I kept firm control of the situation. I had already closed off my feelings. But she stood up hard; I felt a twinge And briefly moaned against the dark Ache within, then twisted expertly To accommodate it. And I saw that It could have gone either way here.
I clasped her cold, white shoulders.
Not to squeeze, that was the trick -
No Rorschach bruise as remembrance.
Instead, to bear down - logical, strong
But gentle - without overstretching
Credibility, tearing the membrane
Of inevitability. Short sigh.
Hold. A breath.
Hold. She's
Gone.

Suddenly, so suddenly
Part of the past's
Murky soup.
Her scent
Teases
Tears.

I sense the cost of the break -
That I've now squeezed
Closed inside:
A dark cave
In a white
Box.

The future, though, is clear.
Now, then, I can rise,
Purged, towards
It.

Now I feel
Release,
Rel-
ease.

THAT WORD

I spoke that word, that word, the other day -
like forgetting to say 'the Scottish play,'
or 'Break a leg.' Like slipping
on the rubbly hill-paths near my home,
and peeling a crescent of shoe-leather from the toe.
I'd ignored the thing for years, pushed it off when it nuzzled me. I pinched its nose, just where it hurts - 'Fuck off' - then smeared its snot across my pants. I kicked it out from underfoot, then caught it humping the back of my leg, its penis-head dabbing like lipstick.

I couldn't let it in. It would leave curly orange piles, neat and unspeakable to blister my carpet, cooling into putrid, dusty rubble. It would smother me in my bed, or fart me awake, wipe strands of sleep from its eyes onto my collar. If I squeezed it, it would vomit on my clothes.

Then the other day I lay at the bottom of a mineshaft on my back, bones poking through my jeans. A floppy ear and a snuffle bent the white circle into a crescent. A clatter of rubble and dust blinded me. 'Help me.' And then I said it, I said it, that word. And now, I feel my feet and face being weakly licked. I manage to stroke its naked fur. The white light grows closer every day.