

Else

MARK GOODWIN

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For Nikki

SILAS TARN

Silas Tarn's willow-agile feet pick
out a code of stones to step on; he moves
with the slime-ribbony
mood of a river. Those stones under a swirl

of fusion-illuminated-'i-hydrogen-oxide feel
as synovially smooth as a newborn's joints.

Silas's legs flicker
a lignin-tensile mesh of muscles. The willow-
yellow of bending motion gleams
under the man-bark of his hide. His arms gesticulate

ligament urges; his fingers glisten
given juices. Silas sweats

hints of sea zawns. His voice boils.

And Silas Tarn's mind is cold clarity over-
lying a deep black dirt. His thoughts
are the wind's doing and ripple only
to the rim of himself—that he slowly erodes.

Silas Tarn's eyes are twigs & water:
a dam that seeps . . .

towards a moment of bursting.

GRAVITY

4 men & their long dogs
stride through a field's rectangle

the long dogs' sharp snouts cut
air open

4 men release
their long dogs from leather leads

the dogs rocket

and the just-green field feels
the blur of their paws

in a corner of the field
the long ears of a hare are pinned

flat to a geometry
of ghost & body

space is bent by weight
of bones fur & breath

the long dogs fall

straight as light
through a friction of existing

4 men tall & still hold
limp leather leads

with the 5 pronged
stars of their hands

whilst behind the hedge
at the edge of the field

a pale circle

erupts through an unseen horizon

SUMMER CONUNDRUMS OF GLADNESS

happiness hides in ditches
watches
from the edges of fresh-
cut fields

haunts
the square rims
of short-gold-stalked
expanses where hares
patter their terror

happiness hides
in ditches where
waters film with
rancid blue

happiness hides amongst
flesh bones & fur
broken & smeared
over a road
that hunted

happiness hides
in ditches with
death's concise musk

and the sudden exhale
of disturbed
flies

happiness hides round ruts
or potholes
where frog-spawn dries

when sun shines
too long

happiness lingers in each
glass-syllable-lap
a lake makes
whilst herons reflect
into its surface

how their spear-beaks
leave
dark scars on rainbows

and happiness may come
like the scratch
from a cat mad
for a feather you jab
at its claws—

a sudden gleam of
red

how ferocious
fun is
and how happiness
entwines

with sinister smells
& sounds forgotten on
purpose

how sinuous joys frequent
the slow hot

uncoil
of blurred summers

how our wounds
are frilled with
fibres of being
glad

FATHERS, SONS & DOGS

My dad lays his dead dog to rest.
His collie the A5 killed.

He's dug the hole himself. I help
him shovel in the dry
summer soil to cover
the paper seed-bag coffin.

The evening light bleeds
gold watery greenness: sun
passing through willow leaves
that hang down—close

to this freshly disturbed soil. We lift

weighty stones
onto the soft mound to mark
the place. The weight of each
is harsh work in moments

lasting beyond this time.

My dad weeps. Utters
unbearable apologies
for the broken dog
he found. He weeps.

Shakes.

I hold him as if I'm a father.

THE WIDENING

the lorry brings slivers packed
tight in tanks

where the wet meadow used to be
a lit expanse waits a new dimension
for spangled beings its surface ripples

the driver nets a metallic fantasy
transfers sleek packages of virility

from tank to tub together we carry
a sloshing vibration to the meadow's

edge

my hands are drawn into the quivering
inside the tub a sense as fresh
as teenage disclosures of touch
or that first swim whilst naked

slippery musculature flips & slides
against my arms as cold wraps
my wrists I see yellow-rimmed eyes

wide

my heart pumps its dark current
and the lake's inside is wide inside me

the bank's dark soaked soil smells
cool & full the driver celebrates
another release with

words

Brookies Brownies Rainbows
and look a *Zebra Hybrid!*

he describes the finery of rainbow-fabric
each red spot bears a blue pin-head

we tip the tub towards the new dimension
they nose the rim then

explode

like knowledge they streak
soundless sucked out by the weight

of open

WAITING

The sky is ripe—blue fruit,
soft to the sight. The meniscus

of my vision,
bobbing with worldly objects, rests
on two wells:
columns of liquid plunge
through my orbits to my thoughts.

Cool October sniffs me:
a month hunting with autumn. The womb
with much of my fault & talent laced
through its precious mud

is still full.

The sky is ripe—blue fruit,
too big to be eaten. I do nothing.

October's leaves change slow:
show time as cruel as striptease; fling
rusting moments but don't

let go.

Lake water shapes banks. Reeds obey
October: begin
withering. Signs show. I sniff;

water smells of nettles
being polished
to blood's intricate jewellery;

the jeweller, private, showing
nothing, until *it's* done.

Amulet in a velvet bag.

The sky is ripe. This water
is breaking
my impatient heart. I wait,
wait for you; wait

for your charm.