

Bruce Parker¹

A Fine Day in May

Thunder stumbles, cracks purple clouds,
water slithers, slashes, finally its chorus hushes
all around in sound, drowns birdsong, hisses the world shut,
not like the soft touch of snow, but the shush of splash,
steady as a brook, auditory pointillism.

Then in the gale that picks up,
rain shatters on the window even as
the sound recedes far off, gusts reduced to ripples,
grows small, a squalling, falling to a fret, a squeak.
"Put the morphine on his gums,

so he won't fight to breathe so hard."
It is May, the sun shines, birds sing
just outside the window. The storm dies unheard within,
the breath stops, the birds sing,
morning is warm, a lawn in the sun.

Listen Here, Doctor Linguist

Division and refinement
and, yes, forgery,
the *style* of it
better to

unwear your under
worn beneath garments
bare skin.

The way things are being said
is not necessarily the best way,
the scientific writer is often
and that is why we all should.

Better to
go naked
than suspended in layers of meaning.

Memoir

Remember how he and a girl he never married
looked at rings in a jewelry store,
watching the light glint off the gold rims
of the elderly salesman's glasses,
the rainbow of the thick lenses
on a hot day when she was young,
radiant, tan in her white sheath, laughing
with her gentle eyes and voice just after her friend's wedding.
She had been away,
he was surprised to meet her at the church;
she had turned to talk to him,
the evening in her cool eyes,
the hills beneath that violet evening as brown as her hair.
He had almost forgotten her,
had certainly forgotten her effect upon him;
this memory, in sadness but not in despair,
shall come to him without comfort or consolation.

Some Rain in a Garden

At ease we listen to drops strike leaves
and leave our thoughts of death for another day;
we hear the water creep by clods of clay
and be taken up by roots --- yes, not yet
bereaved we hear it, our ears sensitized, we say
the clouded sky weeps with joy to get
another garden filled with water and good things,
and we are able then to put off dying long enough
to live our little time and bear our little pain,
to sing a little song, to praise a little rain.

Two-Part Invention

This harpsichord is a brook in a box,
and a happy noise is plucked from within
that speaks of dignity and joy.

Each note has a name,
but they pass so swiftly
I cannot call them;
I hear only
relationships
and the span of each,
and how each sounds different from the others
not needing names.

A View out the Window

A tree spreads green lace upon the gray table of the sky
in circles and swirls of branches and young leaves.
We are past the dangers of early April
when those close to us have died,
and so we may have another year.
The young leaves will flesh out
into deeper green, the gray yield to blue,
another season of fair weather, the fragillest bulwark
against the death of Spring when its blossoms
remain unseen, blindfolded by grief, birdsong muffled.

There is talk of another year or two, while
we circle round the sun in wary weavings
that but secure us a weak daylight disabled
of any power to grant growth, pried
away from one another by anxiety and fear.
The young leaves will flesh out
while yet we linger, long loving, true,
our words to one another the hallmark
of a life of balance between this gossamer
web of leaves on sky and wind that leaves it ruffled.

¹ Bruce Parker trabalhou como professor de inglês como segunda língua e foi editor técnico. Também traduziu bastante. Tem escrito poesia por mais de 50 anos. Apesar da maior parte de seu trabalho está concentrado nas décadas de 1980 e 90, quando ainda estava na universidade, retomou a escrita de poesia no ano passado. Dos poemas aqui apresentados, três foram escritos há mais de 40 anos e os outros três fazem parte da produção recente do autor. Seu trabalho poético apareceu em *Common Ground Review* e em *Poet Lore* (Fall, 1978).
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