

Classic Poetry Series

Daniel Nester

- poems -

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Deaf Rush Limbaugh's Macaronic Blues

Soon I'll hear your voices, people,
and you'll sound like Donald Duck.
I'll hear every car horn honk,
every plink and plunk and plonk.
And you'll sound like Donald Duck--
one voice, indistinguishable, under God.
Every plink and plunk and plonk.
Comprised of pitches and lengths,
One voice, indistinguishable, under God.
It was like free jazz there towards the end,
Just comprised of pitches and different lengths.
Soon I'll hear your voices, people,
every immigrant, businessman, pundit.
And you all sound like Donald Duck.

Daniel Nester

Late Anniversary Madrigal

May you find help from action figures I keep.
May you find them in the top drawer
And bring them out while you sleep
And I welcome darkness--
The flickering TV, helicopters
hopscotched overhead.

May these nightdolls help you,
When every questionnaire questions you,
When diagonal smoke
Mafficks treetops.
Use this antidote liberally.
May your walk to the F train be not alone.

Daniel Nester

Notes On An Unadorned Night

after Rene Char

Let's agree that the night is a blank canvas, a station
break, a bridge of a song.

Let's agree further that activities at night—movies,
campfires, reading by a lamp—are all
basically an homage to the day.

I have come to regard these two statements as
contradictory. Let me explain.

First, set aside that one could see a movie, torch a fire,
and read with the sun blazing over us.

The in-between aspect of night need not spark a flurry of
activity, is all I'm saying.

You could do nothing at night! Just lay and sleep!

A Cézanne sketch I looked at last night bears
mentioning.

A big Gallic face, reclining upwards, looks up at three
boxcars on train tracks.

The man's eyes are wide open and unfulfilled.

The two disemboweled deer I saw the night before also
bear mentioning.

The torsos of both deer were connected to faces, both
looking up.

I assumed they were struck by trains near the house
where I was sleeping.

Anyway, it occurred to me that as I looked into these
two dead deer's eyes that so much has fallen at
me, rather than simply by me.

I want to be among people. I do.

But I just want the easy parts skipped, for bodies to rub
up against each other, to always feel as new flesh
touches new flesh.

Those deer weren't an emblem of anything. I'm not like that.

I don't need dead animals to mirror my own interior world.

But what I am saying is that the dead eyes did shock me,

and it didn't help things that it was by a dark highway.

And it did force me to feel my own heart bumping fast, me in my sweatpants and jogging sneakers.

I felt like a damn idiot out there, under the moon with two dead deer at my feet.

It made me want to go home and watch a big, dumb, funny movie.

At least it did at first.

I turned the movie on, but I couldn't focus.

It seemed as if what I was watching—the man and woman's looks of madcap surprise, the snappy music cues—were fake re-enactments. Which, of course, they were.

And then the whole idea of movies, especially watching them at home, especially big, dumb, funny movies, seemed to be the stupidest idea in the world.

Watching them in a room with complete strangers, in a dark room—that's a better idea.

At the theater where I see most of my movies, an employee makes seating announcements over a PA speaker.

All the patrons wait and corral inside a rope, much like livestock, until the announcement is made.

We then descend down an escalator, silent, and go into the theater.

My head has to crane uncomfortably to see the screen, since I have this long gawky neck.

The theater doesn't have what they call "stadium seating."

Another thing about the theater is that every few minutes during the movie, you can hear the train—the 6, the D, Q, and F—rumbling beneath your feet.

No one, at least to my knowledge, has complained about this to the managers.

It's somehow reassuring that people are going somewhere while you're seeing a movie with other people.

It's a good theater because the movies there are of a high

quality, and you're with other people who want to see
a movie.

One time, Cindy Crawford, the famous fashion model, was in the same
theater as me, right behind me and my date.

Everyone tried not to look at her, but of course we all did.

I was on a date with an Irish girl who was an interior designer.

We went to see a movie that took place in Ireland, in a swamp.

It was a very quiet movie, and about halfway through, I fell
asleep.

The rumble of the trains woke me up.

When I woke up, I at once smelled the Irish girl's hair and saw
the movie screen.

The scene was a little girl, petting the head of a deer.

The sound of a nearby brook was heard in the back speakers.

Cindy Crawford had gone.

When we left the theater, it was still daylight outside.

I was still sleepy.

Submitted by da

Daniel Nester

Suspicious Minds

Lately I've sat here afternoons
just listening to the
gluttonous newsmen argue

about fathers who kill
their wives and kids
then spirit off to Mexico.

My life's knee-deep
in fathers, embedded
in my own shaky tenor,

and though mine's as good as dead
my life still wakes up and pees.
My world's still on fire.

If I could be anywhere else
in the world, if I could be anything
but ham-handed today, I could cheer on

the vacationing comedian
who finds one this morning
hidden in a hut.

I could be vindicated.
What I mean is all this father-surrendering
gets me tired,

that it's getting old,
that it's the most difficult part of my day.

Submitted by da

Daniel Nester

There's Got To Be A Morning After

I heard it once, smoothed-out
by gallons of coffee,
chest husking like a plow
and pulled it into a basement.
Cardigan-wrapped the next morning
and only then was it true, only then
was I so hungry I could eat at the roots of it,

and lay down like a napping aristocrat
dreaming of pendulums
potbellied, empurpled,
pissing outside, and my
boombox played it again, its notes
encircled by my poor shy ghosts
made quiet speeches to the wind
saluted this song's toasting.

Daniel Nester