

Marc Jampole

THESE ARE A FEW

Last night in sheets of sound I sweated junky harmony:
the slick streets, the lights moving the dark, silence like clamor,
void where needle pierces into skin, into nerve, into mind,
rain drops on roses, stillness with whiskers, droplets are snare drums
throbbing sweet wonders, copper kettles, mittens, om pramana,
an emptiness filled with endless seeking, limitless godliness
animating liver pain, measuring time, giving the ear depictions
of brown paper packages tied up in veins, door bells and sleigh bells

in trees, cicadas are legato mallets that understand the universe
as jagged metal tone, a loss of binding chordal sense, witch pitch,
cat walk, wringing out sheets dripping with sweat and urine,
wringing sound from dripping pages, extracting om pranava,
vomiting the green excreta of my favorite things, my favorite tones,
my favorite girls in white dissonance, bitter tastes pour past open lips,
sweet tastes stream past the rush at unexpected withdrawal
when my man came with blue satin sashes, snowflakes that stayed,

the rush at playing the unexpected interval, the completed scale,
every music resonates that bursting spirit of sleep, resonates
restless modality, something I dreamed last night flushes warm
like bright copper kettles melting in needle's first fire inside,
wild geese fly above the Hudson, cream colored ponies,
schnitzel with noodles ripping at liver, diseased flesh my spirit's home,
like the tenor tone that stays inside, silver-white winters
that melt in dry mouth, arms too heavy to lift, om prameya,

brain thrashing slowly, miasmic piano welling under water, teeth
that melt into spring that melt into dog bite, bee sting, sadness,
cold goose bumps, restlessness, bone and muscle cramps, om prayojana,
is this how my father died in his stomach? how my aunt and others?
bus rumbling past window, pestilent street lamp through

cracks between blind and sill beaming like a deadly heaven,
 each answer induces another question, like miscarried knowledge,
 demonstrating I live in this now, in this here, in this why,

if I want it to rain, I play and it rains, if a friend is ill, I play and
 he is cured, wild geese fly, which syringe rotted my liver? om samshaya,
 was it at the Vanguard with those white eyelashes wearing suede?
 was it in that room without chairs? was it with cream colored peonies
 where I blew long trills through collapsing veins, briskly opened
 to journey beyond all of them, beyond all questions, beyond all players
 by a rush of rain, of snare sticks on Circle's pavement,
 your secret life, architect of the highest order, are bantam steps,

turbulent urgencies, improvisations, blue satin slashes,
 something that hasn't been played before, the moon my crescent,
 its wing my meditation, I don't feel that bad to hear part of it,
 to want all of it, timeless beginning, supreme silence, giant steps,
 from the first sound all history unfolding as lotus, the central hub
 from which all voices are spokes in the first vibration, the eyelash,
 the implacable, unmovable legs, heart slowing to walking bass beat
 in a ballad of acknowledgment, resolution, pursuance, psalm,

the jewel, that spirit giving birth, the utterance and the individuality
 of the speaker obliterated in his own sounds, the left hand rising,
 intangible resembling tangible, wandering through sacred grounds
 in this city at night, the train's rumbling below like the horn on my head,
 the river within the thing and the thing within itself, the thing waking,
 the thing dreaming and the thing in dreamless sleep, forming eternal
 cry of gong, wail of cymbal, with lips to reed making sound, then
 mouth moving and making no sound, then sound of soundlessness,

then remembrance of sound, chant grabbing my yellowing skin,
 when I'm feeling sad I simply remember the warm woolen vamp
 of philosophy, these are a few of my favorite sounds, om siddhanta,
 no such thing as dying young except for those I leave behind
 yet I fear what I no longer have a part in brown paper packages tied
 with the chant that's a habit, the chant that's a dream, the chant
 that's a meditation of the doubt, of the purpose, of the ascertaining,
 listening for it all the time in everything, not finding it and still I search.

DIVINE AMNESIA

Swelling beyond my vision,
fluted clouds conceal the earth below,
the fragile lights, the asphalt grids,
the patchwork green and gray;

and hosts of bargaining humans, too,
beneath this opaque whiteness lapsing into darkness.
It is only the remembrance of these things
that gives me proof of their existence,

like the supposition of a golden age,
or desire for one woman
filtered through her resemblance to another
like blots of ink, devoid of shape

but suggesting impressions of form,
or like the clouds, black in spots,
as if, forlorn of cause, shadows cast themselves
against the burling frozen white.

A BROTHER'S FUNERAL

Watching aging hippies shovel
 dirt upon his nailless coffin
 reminded me of when
 we laid on plastic ponchos
 in a tipi near Oconi's weir,
 for five years his home,
 and gazed through the hole to the sky.

 He, former science whiz,
 praised a spirit guarding tipis.
 I, Arts and Letters, compared
 Chippewa tensile construction
 to Old World compression.
 We searched for patterns
 in countless specks of still and moving light.

I cited lines from *Meno*
 and he began to quote verbatim,
 excited, losing his *Southern*,
 speaking New York again,
 from Guthrie's translation, he said,
 his eyes connecting swarming brows
 to make a rolling draw bridge,

 his recital of Plato broken
 by a shout through trees:
 Tipi living must be awesome,
 his friend come for midnight breakfast.
 We tramped to his corroded car
 blocking the road, an officer pulling over,
 and he talked his Southern way out of the ticket.

 Someone pushed a shovel
 in my hands, my turn now
 to cover his body with dirt,

and I felt a sudden need
for his massive craftsman arms,
like when we were boys
and he opened jars for me.