

Circus by Moonlight

Mark Van Aken Williams

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Circus by Moonlight

flanked by a quiet of night
they watch
the parade, migrating
circus figures,
passing in unfamiliar
outlines of pygmy
rotundity
and ballooning-bubble-elasticity.

limp sleepers, hanging
by moon's hooking crescent,
space babies with
no planet, dangling
to the organ grinder's
hypnotic spell,
while cotton candy —
cocoon, envelopes them, in sticky.

What the Hell Am I Doing?

to start is always
just letting the mind
limber up

you're not quite sure
when the hidden resources
between synapses

and that mysterious region
that creates the things
we know not where they

had an origin or impression
will awaken
and extricate itself

if in fact it is a self
living and feeding like
a leech on our dreams

every now and then regurgitating
a picture
a smell

that prods us like cattle
to at least try to
put it down

or put a smile on our face
perhaps a story or
welsh-like sentence

the kind you need to
read over and over again
just marveling

marveling

Solitary Signs

i come from this wall,
but not as graffiti,
with cryptic lettering
that declares the
boundaries of suffrage,
extracted from a child's
innocence — blood still warm.

i am not a thick
moss, the mold of suffocation come to
seal forever an offensive mortar, a tomb for our
sins under a lush
and deceptive green.

i am born of a seed,
deposited unseen by a
breath that was gentle
as a lover's sigh, to
draw support through
the decay, a blooming,
simple and susceptible.

Grab It When You Can

had a chance
when the circus came to town
to scratch
the need
turning round and round

had a chance
to carve initials in a tree
when the pocketknife
was sharp
and sufficient

had a chance
to ask for a dance
while the girls
were fanning their innocence
across an empty floor

had a chance
when the moment was perfect
and nothing could miss
for a boy
competing at mumbletypeg

The Dialogue

try not to burden
me with things
that i have never felt
under the influence
of weightlessness

tell me again about
feather-weighted bones
that will carry me
beyond the lamp which
lights the lifting

speak carefully when
addressing the environment
of uncertainty
for solar flares will
assault the principle

i tend to enjoy the
part where pine boughs
fall upon the headstone
far below the floating
moon where wildly i spin

Not Here, You Don't

there's nothing going down here.
no long cool players speaking
in cut-off phrases, that tell
stories in themselves – hip riffs.

no music from alley basements,
sounding the call of night games,
the hand come on – crotch grabbing
to telegraph an intention.

there's nothing going down here.
no stretch limos thumping low
rider samples, with fog cutters
leading the way – ships over america.

no airwaves leading the religious.
sounding the call of barefoot
babies, crawling towards a dew
covered dawn – fields of redemption.

When Comes the Guitar Electric

what is it about
hard edged guitar
 cutting
 clean grooves
air-streamed sounds
that excite
 something in our
 scale
kind of religious

i feel lighter

is it some tribal
instinct
 bang those bones
 string the bow
to fire arrows
at the sun
 curving in an
 arch — to fall again
listening for the
scream

i am invisible

is it a heart
 meter
jacked up higher
like a balloon
 so near the saber's
 blade — a silver flash
pounding
 against
 rib cage
involuntary ticking

i am closer to the heart
 — wah wah

A Sweater Day

today has the first
chill of the year.
a sweater day –
one to once again
unseal the drawer,
slightly fastened
and dormant, the
one with six layers of jaundice-flesh
paint, the legacy
of previous tenants.

it will take this
day to discharge
the sour measure of
mothball-musk, an
asphyxiating balm
with its momentary
etherreality – a foggy
climate. where
the last hope for
indian summer dulls
under anesthesia.

The Writer as a Child

this is an open letter
to children who
verily cannot put feelings

into their own correspondence
because i could never get past
that defective first recognition

but do not ache
because it was the convention
that censored the attempt

so don't rely on formality
but hold to your heart all impressions
and disclose them later

when the competence matches
our automatic assimilation
of powerful perceptions

it's there
waiting for the right time
as your substance synthesizes