

ON A SUMMER'S NIGHT

Rohit Sharma

“Peculiar travel suggestions are dancing lessons
from God.”

– Kurt Vonnegut. *A Cat's Cradle*

Lunge of sinew bone and muscle
Motion incarnate
Frozen in cold halogen glare.
Desperate plunge of a piston
Hydraulics inadequate
A bludgeoning thump.

Coquettish *coquis*
Loud as trophies
On a mantle shelf -
Crowning glory of my faux fireplace.

The purr of contentment
Loud and rumbling
The design of malcontent rage
– My car's engine
Loud and grumbling.

Vonnegut's dance lessons from God
Rendered empty
Of all didactic content,
Much to Brecht's dismay.
Travel turned to slaughter.

Bugs dogs cats
Life denied into submission, or run down.

Festina lente lost with the language of its genealogy
Lentamente as antiquated as a love
Of lives' equality.

Love itself a red stain on a bumper sticker
The bumper
An essential
In our festinate lives,
Even as we carve hearts for dinner.

Autumn

Today
My maple trees have donned an orange eventuality
As if to say
Fall is here to stay.

Eight floors of a parking garage
Lit in aseptic orange
Form the backdrop to my two maple trees.
But where do the yellow emergency phones fit in?
And where the reflections off the glazed hoods of Sunday-morning-
waxed cars?

And the roller-blading couple –
Where does it fit in?
As she stops to kiss him right underneath my trees.

I thrust a gray window at them
It says: Wait till spring is here
Wait! For fall is here to stay.

And then in one instant
My maple trees shed their leaves.
In unison they fall
Announcing in chorus the lurking winter.

Buried under orange leaves
The young couple blends with the orange screams of a passing
ambulance
As it makes its way to the aseptic orange neon interior of a hospital
Carrying life or perhaps death.

And all at once
A passer-by thrusts my gray window back at me with a scythe.

Winter

From within the warmth
Of my cozy studio
I stare in mesmerized longing
At all the snow flakes
This early winter flurry
Sends drifting to my windowpane.

I gaze intently at them
Trying to freeze the individuality
Of their crystalline construct
Even as they melt and disappear almost instantly.

I wish it were colder
I wish all crystals froze
I wish I gave them names
Pertinent to their individualities.
Gave them names
And assorted them in my circle of acquaintances.
Acquaintanceships that could only be sustained in the cold
Acquaintanceships that I could extinguish at whim
With the minimum of an exhaled breath.

Spring

The town's abuzz
Winter is past
As spring approaches
Life's blood stirs fast

The hive has thinned
Some to hunger fell
Some to burning brush
Where the Joneses now dwell

With the equinox sun
Warm and shining bright
Our young bee awakes
And takes to maiden flight

Messengers have sung'n danced
Much pollen promises their ditty
What seems to us random flight
Is impeccably planned activity

With the sun in its sights
Dodging the bee-eater's voracious bill
Driven by decisive instinct
Our bee finds wild lilies by the local landfill

Millennia of instinct
Have encoded its genes
It does naturally what GPS
Has just only started to do in our machines

Thus hind legs laden with pollen
Our bee is hive-ward bound
It flies high and safe above cars
That on the new highway abound

Flies high and low
Flies fast and slow

With the sun ready to set
Fast approaching hive and rest

But what devilry does it see
40-watt bulb where no light ought to be

Forgotten its flight pattern
Disoriented, it struggles

Its bane
A windowpane

Crawling desperately over glass
A niche a crevice to pass

It finally manages to enter
(In background the Joneses banter)

Furiously it attacks the light
Singed wings sustaining flight

All through the night its struggles grow
Morning finds it weary disoriented dying
Fresh promises of earthen spring forgotten like
Scattered fallen pollen from a hind leg still twitching

Rohit Sharma
University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez
Puerto Rico