

Chocolate Death Carols and Other Poems



A Chapbook by Greg Bem

for Scherezade Siobhan

written 11/17 to 12/8 in Seattle, Washington

Chocolate Death Carols

I will try to mimic the harness
if you let me hold my own hands.
I will try to give into your image
if you let me sit in the high seat.

*

My phone does not ring and my head does not either.
The gut is the most beautiful part of the body.
We need more love every step of the way.
I feel like a glacier encumbered by shattered moons.

*

Mobile advertisements don't really remind me of anything.
A sink to put a hand in. A shoe to put a foot in.
None of these relationships are present with the glow.
A dim switch on and off but rarely feeling with feeling.

*

Am I made for thinking about sequences of gutters?
The way the rain looks at you while it's away.
While you sleep in the haze and the dry.
The entire world is looking crystalline and gruesome.

*

I wait for tricks and tips. Trips and ticks. I wait for it all.
Here in my brick and here is my castle of boredom.
Here where the carpet is always clean.
And the smiles of everyone are worth memorizing.

*

Exacting a created act by opening mouth and inserting chocolate.
The caramel reminds me of spools fire careening off a tree.
When I was a child there was a canister and gasoline.
Somehow we did not die that day. Somehow the forest still stands.

*

Dreams of slaughtered denizens within a library's bowels.
Punctual perhaps but not at best and it's not my best face.
Thinking about the rain making strange breathing sounds.
The building being a pillow shoved up from the bed of this Earth.

*

Carpet burn amidst soles of rubber amidst shoes of suede and it's blue.
The brunt of the situation is that I might lose hearing or want to jump.
But don't count on me to do either, hands aplenty with glass of tea.
Serendipity is dreaming you'll come back online and I find you there.

*



Dreaming of a fleeting bit of normalcy in my verse but I left it all.
No sense of noise and no sense of tone and my gut's bigger.
Perhaps the I in innovation needs more starvation to come out.
Perhaps not stuffing my throat'll lead to new eternal glowing lows.

*

In the thickly lit counter some vague sense of energy pulling eyes
and dragging vision into a soaking parking lot with a train sprawling by.
Graffiti is the light bearer and the clouds are menacing and I know nothing.
Break room nothing-faces and my pasta is a monster with dripping claws.

*

Speaking of spirals or the memory thereof, we live in one.
And we are dizzy and confused and the angles are all messed up.
And people are screaming about bleeding and murder too.
Speaking of spirals we can't even figure out what we're saying.

*

It's fairly flexible and my stomach trembles beneath the belly.
The skin is riptide and churned butter and I have pink Excel tiles in mind.
A vast array of data exists here and I wish I could cut without ever pasting.
I wish I could taste more chocolate without wanting to die so viciously.

*

A dream is a waistcoat of streaming fluids.
A window is a dream that captures and demands.
Was it the hordes or the hoarding that kept me going?
Looking at metal painted in black like a channel of tracings of fingers.

*

Lean back and take the tract of space and breathe out
where no single breath has been sent spinning, spirals,
the ones that cause commotion and eruption of tissue.
Enlisted breaths to tickle the ceiling make you feel antique, fat.

*

And damnation and Twitter and the stealing of time.
And a tourniquet of time is the way the browser commands.
Browse what but a series of little syncopated methods.
Become who but a silly tease of a simulacra: precious without scars.

*

Orange blossom tea the packet resembling a face or a fear
or a freckle that you tore out of your skin because of the insecurity.
Or a fair that comes to town and then leaves your skin dry.
Salve of remembrance with bees dead in frost.

*

Beige footprint and my mind feels like a jello mold.
And there doesn't appear to be any jello in it.
That's all my gut is, moldy jelly that's ready to attack.
Stay away from the din of my innkeepers and their gluttony cells.

*

The reversal in quartz or rose or smoke or just stop
and let the rush of volcanic static sweep up off feet
and let the brunt force utter an echo through crag.
Molasses mind makes sheets of slides like figures fondled.

*

The chaperon is an office complex and it is here to guide you.
To the reaches of flares and forgetfulness, and it is canny.
To the flats of the fields and the bulges of the hills.
We will be shifted in and out of position and it will be safe.

*

Orders to be processed. Orders and processing.
Precision. Or an incision. I'm thinking of a knife blade.
I'm thinking of grease and spools and time is rotten
and the smell is so strong you can't think of anything else.

*



Escaping the momentum of the moment means stepping away.
Means conceit the concerted effort, or at least merge it.
The way we grow into the groan or look after our guttural.
Mountains no longer seen for they are shadows as is all this.

*

Think softly now: dribbles and dribbling are different.
As is ice and icing. Things come down to consequence.
Take the pinch of sand you left for me and hold it in the light.
So sooner easier to part with by releasing the pinch.

*

Here's one for the yawning and the crashing and the burning of cocoa.
And the belly as it presses against an arcane ridge of plastic coating.
The image we face crumbling like tarmac, brittle of doom, rain slosh.
I want to eat the crumbs from the ground while running holiday jigs.

*

Interruptions for the phalanx: fortitude on the office carpet lot.
Could have called in sick but strictly stubble in the mind's corners.
Holding prominently pens made of dreams and wishes and money.
Monies tied together with satin bows stained with excess of grub.

*

So let the chocolate soak into the gum line and let the good times roll.
And let dreams of frost keep you from falling asleep deeply, deeply.
Besides the shadow people the static of each peripheral twitch.
Behind lock or sprig or shy or coo a lambasting of dust tropes.

*

We wish you a merry series of dead Ballet dancers twirling and twining.
We wish you a sequence of photographic slides depicting new cruelties.
We wish you strips of meat layers with stripes of white, molded paint.
We wish you forever an instance of happiness to ruin all other moments.

*

This list will come with cookies you can be sure to throw up in the future.
Because I know your jaws will crush to mush any gift I provide you.
And any gift you provide me an exacto microcosmic crime scene.
Let's play a new game: detectives before the storms of ice and snow.

*

Dear plod to turn up the treble amidst this cacophony of booms.
The whistle turning metallic while the fires rage across the tracks.
Tents dampened by storm wet and the amok of the mud trekkers.
Aloof is how I'd call it, mouth turning to wax, heart beating bloody oil.

*

Intrinsic and instagib paperclip: a manifesto long since forgotten.
Like the way record slip stacks in corner or highlighter green is a color.
Your mouth crisp making kisses and triggers my spleen.
Neither simple nor nautical in this cuddly Piscean dreamslap.

*

Time's caulk fixed and steady like an aplomb of bombs.
Your clock face ripped to shreds by new technologies.
The women they come to you with eyes made of crystal.
The men float face-down in boiling rivers to the appropriate vats.

*

Stab wounds for pigs and ducks and all the little cheerful chirps.
All the whittling and waddling that has gone into the song of this knife.
All the strange looks and repressive gapes of our valiant folktales.
Jammed traffic doesn't matter. The eye's dancing on the gilt of the prize.

*

It will be weird as the cascade smooths down your hair.
Dancing like icing on crumbled scenes of gingerbread gore.
The trees will flicker in the wind like candles and all will be still.
I will utter you a hush with a single, frozen digit to my lips.

*

Cultural appropriation as flagellation as a truffle tragedy
and there are no more sunsets for I am bowing down low now
examining the dirt low now and there is a giant stream of ants.
Biological bridges like the way language is a dart stabbing the neck.

*

Dancing skeleton in snowflake and sudden emerging peacock.
Twin hands making wraps in the air like a chilled sorcery.
Students of begged image and sacrifice is the one-way planet.
I keep socks on my feet to keep me from emulating the death tangle.

*

Signing off from the blend in the road that has carried us over.
Dash of sugar for the embolisms and spike of catatonia for you.
Let's keep it chloroform, mesmerized with mantelpiece visage.
Calm of the gait as our claws drag us up the hill to new recesses.

*

OTHER POEMS

Part 1: Socials

Toni and the infinite conversations, discourse of usual
but also a segmentation of unusual and an inebriation continues.
And we fly around attempting to get chests off of us,
or was it the other way around? How do you translate the core?

*

At Saltwater Park with Heath along an Infinite Bramble Walkway.
Except that it's not infinite and the bramble is only partly so.
And the water is freezing but the hot air makes it not seem so.
And I wonder about Tides and their fish tacos and if they're any good.

*

The place of Rauan Klassnik in the deepest fails and starts
of a brittle, bone-as-shatter heart, brackish and blackened,
basking in brittle light but only slightly felt here,
the warm buzz of office a wading pool worth of cheer, light.

*

Libby before the freezing fog is another limb of the trees,
those that sit and soak up the salt or sun bleach, so Puget,
while climbing bodies bob before a tide sinking in, or away,
before a queuing, before gasps through unstable bluffs.

*

Yawn like a trench that is slowly filling up with toxic blood.
Stretch hands out like the uprooted tree being carried to a bonfire.
Dig the nails into the skin like a tractor feeding.
Bertha sits and waits, blowfly she is, whore she is, crying, repenting.

*

Part 2: Windows, South Seattle

What is absolute and what is absolutely hidden?
Of trials and of errors and of splinters.
And of Hillman City, this strange space of zeroes.
No heap of ones, or two or threes, or anything else.

*

Behind the glass is more glass and behind that glass are the windows.
They are made of glass and they look out and if you crane your neck
you can see the bastardization of reality: more glass windows.
The other buildings are clones, zombies, doubles: even worse enemies.

*

Skill shots. Hidden rooms. What is the answer? Where are we hidden?
Down below: Fonda La Catrina roaring with patronage.
Beyond: sun going down behind a prickly tree.
I look at the sun and am blinded. *What's the tree feeling?*

*

Like I filled my cheeks I fill my days.
Swirl of flavor and it's from the sun.
And then the night comes forth over Seattle
and I think of smashing windows but don't.

*

Through the Georgetown windows an icequake.
Quaking of the leg that trembles when nerved.
Breaking and all that is good is plastic and wood.
I remember the first day here in blurred motions.

*

Is it another spook that glides down Airport Way South?
Is it another enemy that has been beckoned?
No chocolate will hold me over as my skin is rooted
and the entire core a root system with no mouth.

*

Part 3: With Z

I tell you that Jessica Greenbaum's writing makes me quiver.
Writing as synthetic vomit converted into characters.
A language reminiscent of bile bursting from throat
staining teeth, and ruining the carpet I walk upon barefoot.

*

Like your menstruation I can handle your other realities,
which I hold before me like shining baubles chilling over,
the sun of the midday in the winter embracing ice too,
my mind embracing ice too as I think of bloody concrete.

*

You unroll your mouth like a bandage in the air
and the wounds of the world are covered up in your language.
Healing is mutual: we see the vibration of complements.
We are vaguely familiar with the way the cushioning of fabric explores.

*

And yet I know the color of your eyes, at least as they've been pictured.
And I truly unfold my hands to mask the silhouette of the chosen.
What hidden language sits directly behind us as we clean and beg.
Jumping through hoops acrobatic, plagued by the sit-still and touch-tone.

*

When you crown my morning with a single digit drop of light.
Enough to grasp or place upon tips of hungry, thrashing fingerprints.
Maw of an elastic vanishing point casting rays of sunlight through globes.
My my, how the bay of creeps does cancel out all your uncertainty!

*

You write to me in GIF sprig and emoji curl this season.
The season of our foil and shimmer, our bask-lit sparkle.
The way lips rub into surfaces becoming disappeared.
Memories of mouths collected in small, wooden containers.

*

PS, duckling, let me squeeze the grease out of these eyes and fluster.
The rouge doesn't drain away with such lust present or latent.
Ping and shudder. Pause and spring up. A flock of sunny, golden feathers.
Lucky me, I've got a warm grotto distracting me with its destiny.

*

PPS, suckle, a metallic ring rang out once but our bells are bigger.
The robust reticence is entrancing, especially from you in this blue tone.
Bumbling down a hillside before the slough of an arrested wind,
there is a tingle to my spine and a crackle to the ground.

*



Greg Bem lives in Seattle, Washington. He is a seasonal/holiday employee of the mail order team of Fran's Chocolates. All images in this document are from the website of Fran's Chocolates and copyrighted by them.

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