

INUMBRATION: SEATTLE POEMS



GREG BEM

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1: For Tanya Holtland

It takes sun stab takes melody of tints
 Takes rhythm contours of movement we melt
Beautiful shapes weathering we melt them

we visualize trees calling us aroused
 ghosts within the bark echoes with names
 recognition calling us begging for questions
 learned with grey & green answers

Similarities between desert crag & tarmac quiver.
The wavering & immutable surfaces.

 Smooth streams: boots packed: deeply into ground.
haunting haze West. East. East. West. dream gait
 Time traveled: motion of routes & circuits.

A tree comes forward in no color, & then in all colors.
 We heard it speak: we are from here.
 An inclusion: chilling wind at daybreak.

 Startling: one plus one: staring at the sun: a burst.
water gives lore sun many names
 We providers of the spectrum.
 We rise like hunger from the gut: seekers of satisfaction.

Guzzle before gauntlet. Cradle before hammer sway.
In the wind: watch tracks restabilize: blurred shapes buzzing: soft lights.

Silence for rendition: structural before collapse.
The trembling of courses of action.
We have tipped our hats before dawn's courage. We've begun again.
We know the treading of footsteps, as we know our births.
Reborn every day: time clicks with each arch of neck, each bow of head.

2: For Libby Hsu

Bent upon the manic twist of the edge.
Beneath the tread of tires of bicycles of language.
Molten & brazen. Cacophony & collision.

We agreed to house ourselves with others.
glassiest eyes glassiest faces knowledge intact
Rot: relinquish & rebrand.

Dust reaching cascading mountains: human gaze of gods. Accommodation.
We hold truths up as witnesses & turn each other around like wheels. Condensing.

thorough system lurking answers an arrival

& through progeny: the language: system of exclamations.
To be enlightened & awakened & to understand hierarchy.

& there may or may not be a heroine.
& the smile is as wide as the muscles that stretch it.
& fatigue is real: we tired of mind & body & spirit.
Up hills, down: grit teeth & roll eyes & act & chuckle.
Down the monetization of community.
Down an angular beck & alluring call.

We get to eat. We get warmed. We get nuzzled.

we get forgotten

Creatures alive & still clustered & together.
A rupture & rattle sifts: tokens in a rustle of shadow.

3: For Arlo Smith

It starts with the rain.
& then there is the sound of love.
There is the struggle:
it begins wet & illuminated.

& where are we?
In a city picked apart,
begging for abysmal makers to renew.
& slowly: falling rain.
Gently, falling down sleeking surfaces.
"Little Book."

Little light growing through reflections:
projections upon walls.
Death to illumination.
Father beyond parent: antithesis to void.
Prognosis: a parent no longer static.

The prognosis of the city:
it will come to be ruled.
When we are split & divided in the dark:
"Child King."

& it will be rained upon.
Clenching the book it will be rained upon.
Lit by love it will be rained upon.

When all is finished its glimmer,
when light has finished its dance,
when the rain ceases:
precedence will remain.

4: For Cooper Smith

Who is the person you've been seeking?
A statue imbued with a chipped shoulder.
It could have been endless.
& so we imagine reliving it.

We retell a series of truths.
The last width of a flame:
stories through the middle of the night.
Of pebbles and dusted travels.
This length we go.
From yawn to tremble.

Spoken sentences of death
& the moon from above.
The shine striking us flat:
an image cyclical & assured.

Clouds of steam hang over a battlefield.
Scars by scores of dragged caskets.
Beyond: stoked fires by the tide.
The person we've sought.
To touch the face of memory.
To come forth and calm.
To ease the shoulders.

5: For Thomas Walton

Hey rainbow skin, hail to you!
Towers of Assumption blossoming new & glistening.
Plants within screaming of hellos, goodbyes, different & the same.
We watch. We comment.
We breathe the meaning of the means.
Amidst the sites, the citations, such mastery of patterns.

The word: acknowledgment.
The time or place could be anywhere,
but for us, it's here. This lingering.
This lozenge on the tongue so sickly on the tongue.
We who memorize prospects coming in waves,
we as the makers & shapers & keepers of mystery.

Green & brown, brown & green: subtle rumble of murk.
Do we change in this or do the others change in us?

How exquisite! A body of water bodies, a system.
Intact currents trickling across muted color spectrums.
In the center: our sacred, slick woman is eruptive.
The image is as central as concentric as constructive.
Memory of her music issued by a memory of beauty.

Everywhere, everywhere, it's all been born,
& we're at the backhand of it, the end backing to it,
prospects & goals & yearnings & tensions of textures.
The gentry with their ducts & their channels of goodness.
Breathing grandness, an escalation,
beyond the horizon of a tweaker's nihilism.
"Coffins aren't getting gentrified, the streets morph but are the same."
The talk is like a seizure: emotive from the corners, vibrating.
These tracks burned into the skin: that tweaker's horizon cherished.

6: For Paul Nelson

Breathe the slaughter like birds breathe in light of morning.
Rain patters upon drums or perhaps drums are made of rain.
Enlightenment. To lighten. Within: an investigation.
Breathe in. Rain scatters amidst the walls of the man's lungs.
Breathe in. Become the boy. Become the light scattering shades.
Ask things amidst scattered birds as a distraction. Or as beyond.
The information comes in waves amidst the noise of ships & airplanes.
The shouts of greenery beneath the flowering: nature, the nature!
No nature of awakening but here or there the nature of whole things.
Big ideas coiling around us like snakes, shadowy, withered, in need.

A cool & wet transmission & there is a rhythm beneath it.
Economic. This repetition is utterly cosmological. So utter it.
Boost your breath like regrades ripping moist earth.
Touch your palm like an anagram escaping your lips.
Remember the reflections of all the sounds of all the biospheres.
Remember the slaughter inhaled through the geographies.
After all these years of shades & drums: just rain, rain finding calm.
To will to listen if you can shout it, mix of knowing, tremble & thrust.
Become the meat & sit & soak: let the body escape. Think: time.
Let the history escape through us so that we may exist. & live.

Catch sight of the stars for they will be your witness in the dark.
Before the sun eventually rises & carries the body outward.
Ecstatic claims burrowing within us as we bumble around.
This makeup. This throb. Spark of green along the ridges.
This mix-up, this trickle along the tracks to those with lives coming, going.
To those failing to notice or noticing fully. To those who have had chances.
To those who have accepted. & those who have lost out.
Throwing the body's arms up & embracing the rain.
The rain, it still comes, & it is an arrival for the fittest.
No shrug but in ideas as large or as small as stone.

7: For Graham Isaac

1

All bodies brought toward an attraction to need. Water here, there, but always in front. About the body. There is the potential for understanding this direction. Where is the potential for letting in an identity? Whether it's the passing of a midday sun or midnight moon: the passing of one body or another.

Light as the source or light as the reflection, a course of action created for & against us. A course of weather that is here to soothe or to warm. Newness: transitions before the crossing of the path. Bodies fighting & struggling with other gigantic bodies. A stop gap like a missing tooth, or a clogging tongue.

2

Down this short pier we walk & stop to adjust our gaze. We rise with heartbeats & better breathing. It may or may not be cold, or a burning body. Cats & frogs & the loneliest humans together, forever. We can be alone tonight amidst the phallic fallacies. The architecture erect & rising firmly on new terms. Always new. Exhaustion is tracking, trailing, tracing. The grates of the pools of calm berate us.

3

I struggle to pull the shawl of arrival off of me. Have I always been completely enamored? When will things finally grow blurry, embalmed? There is the strut of the king of the vestibule; & the kindness of the king has transformed into the malice of a queen. Flicker or fourteen in neon green as we lay out.

A wrist watch as a quiver, as a cauldron: a distraction. Rising rents, the issues of the spigot: the noose nook. How to make it to the next succession? How to trace or build the grimy hold? We have thus far flung our fans in the direction of mute flames. It is a second nature we must look to.

8: For Jeanne Morel

It starts before a cycle of xylophones streaming the rhythm of home.
Quatrain or quartet of word clusters densely defying an acknowledgment.

History brings forward passengers along rails, beyond land, liquid, air.
I clutch my nostalgia like I clutch my ego: diverse understanding of timelines.

The lifeline is beyond blood, beyond glow: diverse understanding of age.
These clouds will surely be seen, & then they will be seen above us all.

This didactic mesmerization, this lecture of greater warmth.
Our ontological circumstances, our webs upon webs. Our cycles.

The meaning: of dripping blips of knowing, of ages beyond ages.
We speak, we confirm, we confer, we project, & we portend.

The authenticity of action comes bearing its marks. Mono. Singular.
A straight track from old to new. From beginning to new beginning.

Authentic figures of action are us breathing. The rain releases a gift:
spacious, dense air: specificities we encounter & hold like baubles.

The land is filled with giants & those even larger.
Sunsets over a soundly chain of bodies of water.

The consumption is more about the consumed.
How does your neck rest with future ringing the bells, hitting the keys?

Frontiers are built upon waking eyes & exquisite sleep.
How do the great founding folks wax silently in their days & dreams?

The sirens clustered here & we can keep our eyes on them.
The cranes continue holding on, hold whatever is above & below.

9: For Jeremy Springsteed

Language structured like shadows of eons.
A single bulk, dark string offering strand of meaning.
We come here with our belief in fictive realities, communally.

From earth to sky, from lack of head to full head of hair.
The wood moves to stone, brickwork carefully laid like corpses.
Corpses as lines, poems as massive burials of creatures.
This "geography of information" is text decomposed.

Go back to what is replaceable. Go back to space.
Sewers: sludge: succulent: forgettable: molded.
Like Needles we sit & allow ourselves to grow.
Rats with spindly tales & tips of noses & scented senses.

Tunnel through it to define it, beneath it to succumb.
Rapture of our hands & handling of a collapse.
Sewers exist as mazes before us all despite perhaps invisibility.
Sewers exist to core out the layer-space of things.

Anonymous crows twirling beyond protection,
unidentified or unidentifiable ideas perched or floating.
"Crows & alcoholics" as spies of the most alive.
Meaning to be subdued & beyond need.

The city is always moving, so the city always flickers,
depending on the way you glance at its wings,
feathers skirting images upon the imaginations.

10: For Justine Chan

An afforded effort keeps the masses in place. Greatness & smallness knowing no difference. To know: to disagree: to be opposed. An allotment of understanding texture.

One thing leads to another & we have: [Black River](#). Wrongfully or brutally repositioned in its place, as a place of the people, for the people, filled up. There is so much color waiting to be seen built, natural.

& reach for the symbols, "[our symbols](#)," tracings & hinges we can turn to, move within. Patterns of light form patterns of perceived color. An adjustment depending on the stiffness of the neck.

Globes, planetization, the realm of the positioning, the positioners, we who come down such city hills, & beg for city mirth among the clot of the urban, snapping our heels off beyond "[tatters of history](#)."

It is impish the way the cuts & draws drag along. It is the visual of a "[Denny Hill sluiced](#)" to make ways, new ways & caused ways for the beginning of begging. A branded motion, less a swimming & more adrift.

At least the results confirm this wish, "[a final hiss](#)." Montages & silhouettes scrambling forward, the colors crystallizing & forming the whole, the truth coming forward in mountains made of touch.

As though we could touch upon something else. As though we have mountains there & here both. There is the clash of sequence leaving us breathing: broaching &/or breaching subject matters, smatterings.

Nod head & spit fire, a fire as natural as built. "[With black noise](#)" tuck in the cause of your food, your ingestion, while you seethe & consume. Note the quiet before the rumble of need calls again.

The poems in this chapbook were written, edited, & otherwise compiled following Ghost Tokens: Inumbrating Pinnacle, a series of small literary performances situated around & beneath the Seattle Space Needle in January, 2016. These poems are direct reflections of & responses to the creative work of the features of that series, of which I am creatively indebted. Many thanks go to these Seattle artists & friends: Tanya Holtland, Libby Hsu, Arlo Smith, Cooper Smith, Thomas Walton, Paul Nelson, Graham Isaac, Jeanne Morel, Jeremy Springsteed, & Justine Chan.

The original prompt the artists responded to: "Confronting the triumphs & tragedies, the plateaus & recesses of the city elevated, these free micro-events are intended to respond to the fast, urban experience. Each artist will confront & present mindfulness toward "the city undergoing transformation" within a city's frame of space & time." Arguably the poems in this chapbook are also a response to this prompt.

Video recordings of each of the original micro-events are available on YouTube. Additional information about this Ghost Tokens series is available at <http://gregbem.com>.

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Freely available & useable fonts in this chapbook: Lemon/Milk (for the titles) & Geosans Light (for the body). Both can be found at <http://dafonts.com>.

This book is dedicated to Scherezade Siobhan, who thoroughly supported & loved me as a thinker, artist, & organizer before, during, & after the entirety of Inumbrating Pinnacle.

GHOST TOKENS
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