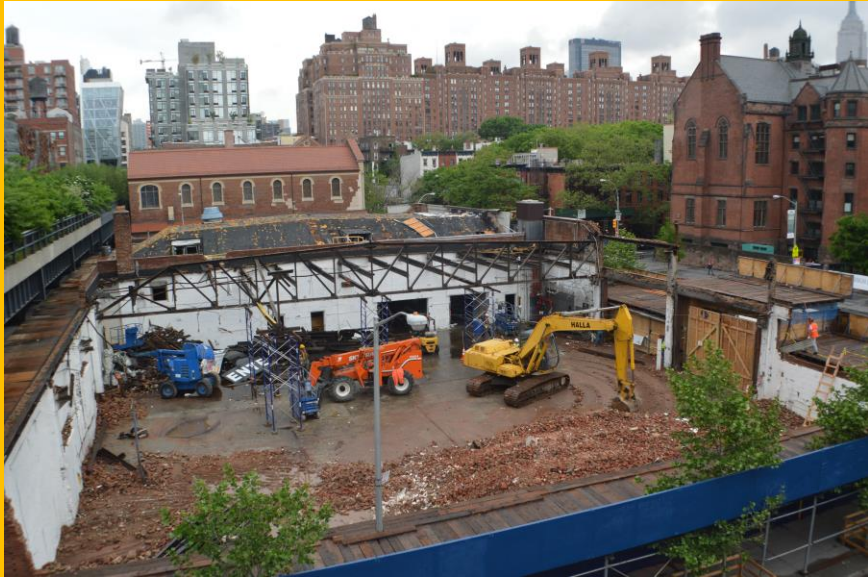


New York Visitations

By Greg Bem



May 24 — May 27



At first glance we all span walls worth thirsty knowledge.
Each of us a singer amidst the millions of others each fevered.

One faceless bodiless has her voice held higher misted
It arises and reminds us the cold and silent audience is this,
Of our own convictions as we alone stand straight and thin

Stranger on the train takes no shame in belting odes to action.

F Train



He sits and stirs as a bubble carried parrying through air.
And he lands right next to my liquid chair
A dare his words cut me off and I notice nothing new.
But three hours of sleep will slit your throat.
White man disjunction before collapse. Ashen soul
Waits and drags its past black through, treed and back.

Higher than

Why rake a bed of flowers

When there are so many bricks you can throw

While the line grinding shells of its wealth could be cocaine



Or a croak it's crooked

Excise

To

Green,

Money comes in all sizes, all lies

Bent behind photographers and their crowing and horizons.

Coney Island as a swathe of police as a swathe
Of unknown

While brother, man, the chance exists somewhere in the rain:
In blisters of wind in blisters of sheets of rain on the feet

Sister continue clutching your umbrella
Continue stitching our footsteps up the mermaid's back

If In the Down Pour a solar cleanse courts us, act wily
Before shaking shackles away



Et nous.

We are sad here.

Dilapidated amusements.

Throngs of police black

Or is it blue?

Or do you taste

The thickest cruelties?

Brooklyn pressured to point maladroït

Circuits, stable circuits. Your face is a circuit. Mine too, flooded.



What is its meaning? Our skin is greening under neon streams.
You and shoulder and heel, light skin surrounded by cloth
Or cloth is surrounded by a flash of flesh no fooling
Could have pointed could have told me Guy of West

We'd be drinking the breaths of each other



The street in its buffet of vomiting women
Leather jacket collections and hypnosis
Goes mostly beyond, unnoticed by the gallantry
Sapping us sapping our passion my crashing
As I monster give birth to quantity of glances and shut
Shut the dirth() shutter of the tarred earth

Slough of large stretched shores of shallows and shops
Your slop is a barge of foreheads on tables fingers in stitches.



Flash mob remix maxed out along Flushing heart
Roosevelt but I say Roo-zee-velt stealthily and crossed out with Main
And seriously, she is screaming at him as if it's all over as if
She fucked a ghost, grizzly air aiming hot eerie breaths
Darted into the bags of masses the maze of trash and chain links stay

We pop open the door to the mania of the mall, walls screaming at us
Or is that the thunderous hell culture of footsteps is extra belittling

We are the whitest actors alive sampling streaming and now
supermarket



Dubious or ostentatious the soft shell turtles yelling in silence
Buckets of them ready to be dethroned their eligibility to be cooked
alone

Or would you prefer your guts stewed with your nearest friends
made into a dish?

Barking like dead chicken cutlets. Chunk. Let's. Let's go out, grab a

And then your worlds grow trampled and stamped with smelled bean
curd



Dish absurd enough to lurch in the pitted pull of your dull stomach
We are searching for an answer you push the cubes away and I shovel
Rice peppers soy beef noodles tofu chicken and anonymous bone in

Intricate piss is a dramatic mauve color or is it mauve the wording
pressurized

And ready to commit suicide jump off my tongue vibrations
splattering everywhere

Better them than earthenware shattering scattering mattering the
most, slowly

For I forgot to cast my own imagination aside it's become undone
strung again

Against the skull and the myriad of stunning traces of your last licks
links locks

Ch(a<i[n {ed Blo}]▷)cks

A Series of Snippets

New York City, May 2013



for

Katie

Kevin

Mom

and

everyone else herein

Photo taking before the greatness of NYPL
Imagining the clouds actually getting darker,
You tourist. Whisked away like whiskey
The tumbler crushing you with ice.

We are not just some blockheads.

We are quite lively and rounded.

And yet here we drink, Kanchana, Ashok, Katie, me.

The name of the bar would chain us otherwise.

My sister greets me and now things are new.
The biggest city here is a cyclone of change.
I describe things in the worst ways
With eyes of smog and skin causal in flakes.

I remember the sins of the lords of trash
Their kingdom clusters of plastic bags
And we are important people with expensive shoes
And the last image a black man sorting bottles on a red crate in
Alphabet City.

3rd and 50 something

50 something and 3rd

We head towards the Coney Island train

A guy with a snare drum two sticks no hands smiles.

I want to create a map
That displays places
But doesn't present description.
Where I will remember me as a ghost.

I certainly have gained weight.

But do I care of certainties.

And what to think of gaining anything?

Thinking of eating as shedding thought.

I misnamed your entire history.

I misnamed your father.

A Costa Rican from Park Slope. NOT Dominican.

Meanwhile you forgive while I regret.

The back of my throat a bundle of soured nerves.
You greet me, Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens
And you offer me your dirt, fumes, pollution.
My nose drips from your toxic bacteria.

So. A Six hour trip back to the soaked coast.

What is it I have store for me there?

Work, preparation, success, doom. Together.

The Asian next to me brushes her arm against mine.

Thomas Bernard and the fate of understanding fate.

What are friendships for if not for acknowledgement?

Paul Wittgenstein was valuable if only through recognition.

We need models in order to watch our own tower tumble.

As I read the many poems of Koon Woon and try,
Try to understand the utter tolerance for instability,
I imagine being with him again in Seattle's Chinatown,
Requesting he read several to me in pacified tones.

BLOATED

I cannot tell where over America we are.
But from the look of the clouds below
Startlingly like microscopic mycelium
We must be getting close to some truth.

After extending the blank stare of my belly
With Janelle's Caribbean in Prospect Heights
And arriving back to Midtown East
I walk 55 blocks and encounter an Alice Cooper lookalike.

It's not that I don't think I could handle New York.
It's that I know of the wider, healthier pastures.
We must choose our battlegrounds wisely,
And understand the nature of privilege when possible.

Day One Train Beggar Performer Poet on E Train:

Asian man playing first a flute then a harmonica.

Day Four Train Beggar Performer Poet on E Train:

Black boy on crutches with brief intro and then silence.

Flushing, Queens is my heart every day in two months.
I stared at the soft turtle shells for sale, alive and scrambling.
The white tub is your home, I kept thinking. It's not a prison.
Even had I purchased them, their fate would have been death.

Flushing, Queens isn't as insane as everyone told me.
I remember Manhattan, years ago, being completely dichotomous.
Perhaps my own lifestyle is nothing more than rigidity.
Perhaps an old chaos of being lent itself to old chaotic places.

In the throws of Dylan's candy shop,
The peak of absurdity this time around,
I feel the urge to steel or commit atrocities
But cannot keep myself from distraction.

Go on ahead and let me figure out a way to understand.
He owns two BMW cars and knows how to produce information.
This poem is for him, then, and it is so so inefficient.
These words exercise their relativity to his strength.

Lisa you are certainly my hippest relative.
Some days I find it so hard to explain myself.
Other days to empathize means to self-destruct.
But here, in the botanic garden, my wide eyes are real eyes.

Prospect Park the pig pen for the gawkers.

PROSPECT PROSPECT PROSPECT PROSPECT

And your love for shitty sunglasses stays strong.

Now. Don't spoil it for the parade of hipster children.

My mother demonstrates her ability to coordinate.
For the first time ever in a city I can sit back,
Walk ahead from block to block to chained block,
And admire life without myself or anyone I know involved.

Coney! I scream. Over and over to no one at all.
I wake up on a deflated air mattress.
The beach was so cold, windy, dead,
And the police uniforms individual abysses.

It's hard not to imagine you are here right now.
Your Californian flesh covered in soot
My grizzled face licking your grease.
Our bodies grinding against filthy curbs.

Cloud creep beyond plastic airliner Window shutter.

Stop auto doing everything every time. (tablet)

Every day I wished I had more energy,

Could figure out how to keep myself going.

Tonight Laura lays in the Death Position
in Astoria where the white people hoard in the streets.
Anna the Russian and Christine from Virginia:
Yes I will smoke with you before I have to go.

At Sugar Freak's we draw portraits of fictional people.
We name them with long first names and short last names.
The people, says Laura, must have fat necks and broad shoulders.
Anna cheats and draws a profile, which is criticized briefly.

Will smiles, handing over the Juniors cheesecake.
He will not accept payment for this cheesecake gift.
That is the nature of the gift. That is its nature,
So why the hell does it feel so uncomfortable?

Han Su how is it we have never spoken?

My glasses must be mimicking his, I think.

My glasses must be mimicking his, he thinks.

We are not the same but we are so similar.

Rockefeller

Rock err fell err

Rahkah fellah

Rawkawfawlaw

This den of warrens of family and lore.
This bacterial breeding ground sleeping soundly.
It invades and infects, is atrocious.
It makes me damned and claws my throat.

Clinton Street or bust.
Or start shoveling food in.
Or forget who everyone is
As the sun starts to coat.

Kevin, my brother, will continue and I will watch.
You know, I could name books after him.
Or streets. Or theorems. Or entire aesthetics.
But love, love protects him with this poetry.

Concrete City poem created with these turned on their sides:

MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS FINANCES STONE

GLASS FILTHS FUTURES CAMERAS

TOURISTS STAGNATION HOMES EYESIGHT

New York all I can say is Ok.
Pause. You continue as imagined.
A Breath. Layers of stereotypes.
You are still so easy to tell No.

My first penetration where, once entered,
The walls remain benign and static.
Worms and serpents have not emerged.
And everyone I pass feels familiar.

I was supposed to use something beyond 5th grade.
So I wouldn't disappoint her or embarrass myself.
I choose Moribund, as in, my moribund faux flora lunge.
Still, I feel false in exerting vocabulary distilled, unnatural.



Greg Bem grew up in Southern Maine. After attending Roger Williams University in Rhode Island, he lived in Philadelphia for two and a half years. While there, he occasionally visited New York to visit friends, attend readings, and explore. He currently lives in Seattle, Washington, where he studies poetry, libraries, and skylines.

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All questions and comments can be directed to gregbem@gmail.com

