



Construction Part2

Construction Part 2

By Greg Bem

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Construction, Part 2 by Greg Bem

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Columbia City, Seattle

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Construction, Part 2, continues to follow the sage of my near-daily observations of a construction site across the street from my apartment building, and within full view of my work desk.

Despite the bursts and lulls of the routine of writing about this new building, the writing process itself, beyond the images and the imagination, has a resounding connection to other daily practices. Construction has reinforced my own acknowledgement of myself as a writer, a constructor, and a person who has the privilege to create something nearly or completely every single day.

I continue to find, through these poems, moments of absurdity in an emotional landscape where I am trying to understand my role as a physical neighbor and a spiritual outsider. I continue to be a voyeur, as well, not interacting with the workers who create this large structure, or communicate with anyone about the project.

In this digital book, I have continued the use of the Bahnschrift font for the majority of the text and have also utilized the Poplar font for the title. The images in this book were taken by me.

This book has been simultaneously released with its sequel, *Construction, Part 3*.

Greg Bem, February 2018

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Day 29

In the wake of the tooth I can lift up my jaw
and there is law and there is land and piles of wood
colored like sand: up and at them, and the pound.
Still the same vocabulary of bodies with moaning tools.

The lot is small but concentrated, slow, pacing.
The world sits in its colored combat: greens and browns,
the landscape of the touchable upon which we tread.
Cars without broken glass or chipped paint sitting nearby.

Urgencies of being in a mode of perfection.
When I wake I move around predicting how it will make me feel.
But I still zoom away, like the crows coursing anonymous,
find my peck, my deviance, my defiant languages.

I have been gone but the symbolism of structure persists.
Was there ever any doubt we'd lose it, lose sight of it?
The room is chilly and awake with the knowing of time.
What warmths and freezes came before, exited, entered, rooms.

The teeth clench when you sleep, biting into themselves.

The applied surface is made up of multiple surfaces.

The mouth is a beautiful jaw designed to scream or be silent.

Sugar Bounty and Concealment

When the walls begin to go up, I am reminded of my friend.
Their voice represented in characters on a screen.
Where and how they typed all part of the cyclone of echo.
The mentioning of protest and the construction of destruction.

The spur of the destructive moments we yearn for, forward
with our greasy skin and shallow breathing and sugary highs.
I look down at this motion of Cascadian architecture.

The hearts and lungs of each of the bodies moving between plywood
the color of the orange sands of an island I once burned on.
Where burning was the rapid heating and decay of skin.

These workers moving through the crosses and swatches of wood.
These workers working across beams as mighty as ribs.
Soon it will all be in, and it will not have been destroyed.

But what was destroyed to bring this body into position?
And where was I or any of us when this sequence began?

It is a day of blight and the momentous curiosity compels us.
The questions of reality and the action of rebellion sit lightly.
Camus hangs once again in my mind like a blanket or cushion.
I hold no weapon but that which can cripple myself.

The building below, in its future iteration, how much of it
will stick around in this world as pieces, fragments, of self?
And will not having burned it to the ground stain us with guilt?

I peer at the horizon of treetops that are a smoky gray
and the electric boxes with capacities of volts in the hundreds.
These boxes erect and active, fascinating, invisibly alive.
The concealment works in many forms, many waves, and is dim.

The Buzzing

At what cost of my own sanity through the aural? Through the aural.
Through the aural I repeat myself because it's a long band of sadness.
This is what my life has become: this screeching buzz at the foot
of the single place I call my throne: the bed with thrown pillows.

I am not an angry person except when I am rebelling in my stance.
There is a stance that gets developed during the shortest days
leading us toward criminal acts all along the digital divide.

The prose seeping like worms from moist earth in summer rain.
But there is no summer rain; there is only winter rain's chill,
and winter rain came and breathed and left us all to sit here
at our computer screens shivering in the total absence of it all.

My eyes ache as I stare at the fortress of noise that sits streetly.
My body aches as I wake in total fatigue once again maniacal.
The clacking racket of the mechanical keyboard is a chore of blood.

The lines don't eat themselves while they are regurgitating
and development doesn't explode until it's been well documented.

I need the pits in my stomach to consume me: to enter a black hole,
a nebula of digestion and self-awareness until my soul blinks
and there is nothing but the doorway that I have fantasized.

We are all cursed when the buzzing ceases and the mind expires
and we must live with the memory saved along the dirty streets.

The memory of the dirty street between me and the buzzing.
Between me and the buzzing the memory of the buzzing creates.
It is a creation of a putrid scene of the extinguished comfort.



In my Sickness

In my sickness there is healthiness
that extends itself into the bodies below.
There are hammers that have large heads
and gray pants that don't match anything.
Incongruous perhaps and I need it all.
The same way everyone needs it all.
The same way some don't have memories
of their childhoods or other faces.
The extension of the layering of faces.
The language of commitment to build.
Fracturing wood into panels and pillars
then placing it all back together.
Sugar infusions here keep us warm.
Fabric shirts and straps keep them.
There is always going to be a division.
Beyond them exist the designers.
Beyond the designers exist canva.
I want to be here and nowhere alike.
They most likely fantasize as well.
The desire to want more of the same
staunches my gaze and dries my skin.

Swollen Glands

Legs spin on top of one another holding secrets.

There is a blue digging device located across the street.

A man with a red hat and yellow gloves lumbers up,
wrangles upon, grabs, then goes and goes and goes.

The fence has been taken down and all I want is to invade.

Take photos, feel wood and metal and plastic,
the wet dirt crushed beneath my feet like swelling glands.

The clutter of life is persistent and invasive.

I watch my phone and the grease stains on its face.

I look into myself as deeply as imaginable, a plunge.

This is jumping into the pool of the cave and imagining.

This is what fake light feels like as it brightens.

The places we hope to cling to as we feel cold water
and the surrounding air becomes the blanket with eyes.

Who watches the catatonic and the otherwise sickly
is the same as who carries out the act of writing.

We are etching ourselves into permanence of traits here.

I am antagonizing the establishment of a sturdy situation.

The nose is a fiend and its goal is to tear apart.

Droplets of blood beckon me into that tactile nightmare
and I can't help but help myself in a hyper gray format.

I can't help myself

I can't help myself roam through certain hills
which have embedded in their grasses signs of blood.

If we look to the land to tell us the truth
we will then see both the truth and the fiction,
the lies will arrive like tendrils and we will open.
And we will sever and we will become exposed severing.

Quiet day reflecting on an attempted break-in.
The construction site loomed just beyond a gray,
well-intended, shoddily-designed set of fences.
I take no fanciness in my approach to a visit.

The visit is deserved at least on aesthetic purposes.
Aesthetics is directly related to morality.
My skin feels good as I think about goodness.
Art is deservedly good and inherently available.

The construction site, however, is barely visible
when sitting right next to it, or several stories above.
I sneeze and I can't help myself in noticing.

There is a dictation that is made through that fence.
There is also a depression being picked up and placed.

But it is here in this white room that I grow confused
and allow myself the space to slowly back away,
approach the day like an outsider would a club,
with careful precision and a moment of the gut.

Frozen into Place

Palaces are built with the hands of many.
Many are built with the windows of palaces.
My stride reaches compulsive expanses of will.
My pestilence is an act of kindness.

Rue the grating that soaks up under feet.
Through passed glances that melt together
we are brilliant and moving upward as one.

The freezing is the arm of the bandit space.
We as a presence stays important while sitting still.
Caveats upon caveats upon systems of such.
The caves that keep us wandering in circles.
Cycles that are larger than this place.

Systems much smaller filling pockets of knowing.
The best construction sites are the ones here,
within touch, within reach, but also behind.

What sits in front of, what captures us still?

Unlatched or cut bolts are of significance.

Cut metal that serves as shackle or shot.

Shot that serves as the means to open.

The site is as open as the eyes that choose
to fall upon it like water even during dry days.

The act in itself is one of freezing this water
and the ice resultant is filled with calm, patience.

We need this as much as it, forever, paralyzed.

We are the ones who act out our moments of need.



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**SIDEWALK
CLOSED**

Construction in the Shell

Mist wrap leaves soft skin peachy
and undone, mostly post-shower touch
a squeeze along smother of surface.

An ingestion of sugars turns me on,
lights of the house beckon highly.
The sprite of the spirit of energy.

I see: turtle, fission, torque.
I feel: madness, the sad faces
an anxiety of glorification.

Do we compete or attempt to stab?
My own malevolence holds me back.
This is the con of construction,
that it disables in the foglit,
that it chills and crawls.

Morning's tides' worth of cruelty.
Or is it simply the burble of commute?
Simplicity always took us further.

Waking out of a soft bed of sinking.
The babble of the soft-spoken,
a price of the purgatory of the city.

We hear but do not even bother,
the identity a lame gulp of ghost.
We get lost in the bowels of air
dreaming our skin is one of emerging.

If death comes for everything, does it matter what
we kill?

Strange pagoda of a morning.

Like bees they become deeper,
harder to decipher, thicker,
the current of beauty bolder,
the colder weather set upon us,
we with estranged faces,
me thinking of expressions,
me wondering who exists,
in front of me the touch,
tryst of the eyed vision,
eyeballs on street levels,
the steady incapacitation
of a waning sound of hammer,
which is now glamorous,
and gone for some minutes.

Can you hold pace with me,
you can hold this place,
the way guardians do,
ways and ways upon ways,

and a blue tractor sits,
and stares at the inches
by which it has moved away,
fleeing the site with no one,
no humans, no acumen,
the workers their muscles
are unfolded ceilings
and perched walls or panels
false in a fathom clear,
and suddenly I see portals
the windows peering beyond
and this is it, the death,
within a Columbia City moment,
hot within a moment missing
dials and networks, cables,
only life here is itself.

In the Cold

Despite the sun turning everything bright,
and the bird-moan chirp of a reversing truck,
it is cold along Hudson Street today,
and you, and you, and you, are in it.

Somewhere your hands are feeling numb,
and your breath peeks like earthen vents,
and the city feels so small, even crushed,
with its hidden skyline and choppy identity.

As for me, I cannot even see you this morning.
I cannot hear your voices, gaze at your bodies,
see you stooping over to pick up tools,
ponder the world that is right in front of you.

Every instant is frozen throughout our spectra
of substantial and insubstantial communication.
Soon you will be joined by me in this aerial plunge.

Soon the grasp of this wintering air will open
and I will gasp as you do in hellish realities.

But not like you, as I will leave again,
but as with you, I will return, a pendulum,
covered in the ice of momentum held back,
wandering through neighborhoods and highways
trying to know the lunge of our situations.

In the Fog Again

The industrialized motif hangs like torn carpets
along the edge of the old, moldy walls of ochre.
Stretch into the heart of the decayed matter
and let yourself be fixed betwixt the issue.
What is here and what is out there, swirling,
mass of moisture, density of incredible visibility,
the language that hovers between the two spaces
like the surface of clicks and a bellowed voice.
It holds us back and brings us home: renewal.
Raw and new, it hangs out and prepares nooses.
What happens today happens underneath like murmurs.
What happens today deals with a foundation.
We all know Seattle's shifty built histories,
so it comes as no surprise that this thought sticks.
It sits here, invader-like, and I am exhausted.
The fog like a backpack filled with more fog.
I imagine taking it off and letting it roam free.
I imagine the disappearance of everything I love,
which equates to everything I don't love, see, know.

But this time at night

But this time at night
we come together in unison.
We come together in a dark
brooding of potential.

The space that haunts me
is a silent but maddening one.
The people that are there
are there tomorrow and morrow.

Over and under the phantasms
(a steady case of shadow-lit reality)
while I sit and fester and hum.

This is the reality that docks
into a special place I've held
and have been waiting for,
though with honesty we become older
and the color black covers veins.

My mind is as orange as certainty
in the realm of the maddening bird.
The placement before the space
is one that is gently corrupting.

Startles and shouts are aching.
The brittle of the long-gone fog.
The memories of the well-lit jaunts.
The dreams of being elsewhere.

It all erupts uproariously
and I can't wait for more humanity.



Music

It's music when freedom becomes association.

The language of dance becomes the backdrop.

An uncanny sense of belonging within heat.

Within the cool mileage that distances us.

More eruption of language all the time.

If you want to join, just send an ask.

If you want to send an ask, it requires speech.

The speech enables our historic functions.

I feel the tension around the muscles

and can evade the tension at the same time.

Black surfaces with green ornamentation.

Decades of spillages persist and mark.

The trilling of percussion trips us up

or coos us back, so we may succumb to the day.

Which is to say: we believe there's a day.

We've been inspired by the wash of lumens.

In a gentle tide of morning

I think I have written this poem already.

Or I read it and applied it to myself.

I was woken by their voices this morning.

The computer has been moved outside
to the common space in the apartment center.

Now there are eggs being fried in oil
and I can hear their diligent crackling.

The white truck with a smoke stain passes.
It is far below but not too far from me.

My finger is gently bloodied at the nail,
wounded from an unknown assailant.
I feel the pressure of my gut heaving
and the lungs are soft but have it too.

Where will we go on this frosty beginning
when the light spits open new languages
and the people are still slightly frozen?

I will go to work where I will shake.

My skin will redden and my eyes will water.

The land filling the space between here
and there will become brittle and soundless.

The water I pass over will shield.

Or serve as a shield as I get lost.

The tails, the trails, and the trials
of the thoughts that glisten in winter.

A construction site that spins silently
across an open globe mesmerizing us.

I could begin the index of the morning
but the tide of the morning itself is,
and it is loud and blue and waiting.

When Men Scream in the Morning Light

Do they dream of their mothers?

Do they dream of software updates?

Operating systems they hoped would renew?

Or perhaps staring as they scream

at the reflection of the light

across the cool, cold, quiet metal.

Life is a cage in the voice of many.

The metallic breath settles down

while the metallic bones become brittle.

What is the news and where did you place it

when there is no more placing and no news.

Psychologically piling on totality.

I flip the eggs, I, flip, the eggs.

I stare at the platitudes in blue absence.

I stare at the multitudes while machines

make their strange noises and win.

Blinds up, blinds missing, engine

and dust scattered across a strange,

curbless realm of quasi access.

No more screaming, just looking.

I hold my head up and my eyes redden again.

Cream and Neutrality

Across the geologies the people in suits appear.
Play your games and infect us with your statements.
Here, the construction site stands in silence.
I was awoken at 4AM to garbage trucks devouring.
I was awoken at 7AM to an alarm and tired muscles.
Now it is 8AM and I write this short poem,
the blue cream of the world matching blue LED.
I can feel knots and spasms below my skull.
There is a sense of center in the pit of me.
I miss the clangings and bangings of the tangible.
I miss those walking around just beyond my vision.
them there even in their twisting silence.
They linger like my fantasies and fading thoughts.
I open my mouth like an exotic, carnivorous plant.
It waits for the air to sweeten with curious flesh.
The blue cream swirls with a timely unison.
How warm it must be right now in front of me
and how cold it must be right there in the future.

I Hear the Call

I wake and hear the call of a built society.
The perished ideas of static and innocence
blend with the those more maleficent.
Construction, construction, construction:
in summer effort there is the range of guilty
and my skin pulls down like a mutating pool.
There is no "we" in the conversation this morn.
It is a "them" and a "they" that blink beyond.
My knowing is inconsequential, lacks idealism.
It is a sturdy and defiant spread of wings.
Markedly different through the rip of surface.
Transmogrification's dutiful frailty of skin.
My face locks into my hands, my eyes pour open.
The city's dimness looks like fisticuffs of fire.
It is waiting that the full weight of the wane
strikes me as a peculiar game worth noting,
before forcing my tearing and scratching.
Before pulling the perfection out of the air.

