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From "Flags, Scrolls, Robes, Deserts, Waves"

Philip Kobylarz
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from flags, scrolls, robes, deserts, waves

... but death is only a launching into the region of the strange untried...

—Melville's journals

A slug. Many wrinkles in sand. The beach is silent after the storm. Buckets filling themselves with water. Stairs behind a door lead to nowhere. Clock face eroding into continents; spirals of where its arms skidded, rubbed. Beads of sticks suckled by the marsh where the birds gather, hopping moment from moment, boulder to dishpan boulder. Hostage marches into a crowd, acquiescing, tasting the wet cloth of one last wish.

In a pocket, key bones.

A collection of butterflies alighting from pikes threaded through their bellies. Quicksand inside mud. Plumes of written letters blow into the grip of the wind, tossed away as random as garbage. Victims of the self cannot smell strands of wild violets immersed in water. Drinking water. Drinking water will only make one thirsty for water. The window, a distant and approaching badland of no particular shape, hue, shade of day. Grains of sand beneath the fingernails.
Tears of moisture on the glass' lip. Sun peering out from well within the shadows.

Wicked how the hair is always in tangles of lust. Canyons fill dormant with solitude, later to be filled with clouds. Laundry lies in bundles, just released. Need only to add matches. Pennies getting darker in a jar growing thicker, losing luster. Not really like pictures pressed into a photo album which last for pages of forever. Gray scales of the pickerel. Oil, oil and water.

Say the ancient coin with an imprint of a Greek owl. Lovers follow crowds of lovers down the quiet halls of museums, or mausoleums to where beauty's stopped. Divination by liver. Maybe sulfur. Whereabouts of water buffalo. Postcards on the table arrayed like decorated plates to be contemplated while eaten from. Cave of the thousand buddhas. The inner ear meets the lips of the conch in an illicit kiss. Fireworks are lost over the ocean where no bridges can be built. Doesn't stop the piers from reaching. See the rockets expelling their seconds of fury. Explosions over the water unfolding as cactus bristles. Sky behind the sky.
Clouds, pass over.

Bear of Russia. Inevitable imprints that tattoos leave behind. Sight of ankles in anklets.

An inability to neck-crook the apex of noon. Seagulls circle hungry circles. The bathers wade out into the depths with wine swollen bladders, their feet nonchalantly searching for bottom. Buoys ringing the bells of their Fortunato caps. Smokestack an integral part of the beach, late part of the century, eveningtude.

Forgotten, lies the moon. Forgotten: memento mori. Forgotten, the single helix of exception. Sacred duality of the jawbone. Flower of the artichoke. Reading tea leaves of steam. The valley shortened by fog. Nothing is as persistent as nothing’s insistence. From cradle to grave boots march. Bread loaves rise like dull Lazaruses.

Footsteps to the ante-room. Walls surging with water, broken pipes, mock-crustaceans of spiders, contain smoke. Rain delicately pools in puddles of spit. What the cloud of unknowing knows.

Cypresses at the cemetery provide directions for the dead. Beer effervescent with salt. Tears stain windows in rivulets of sadness, joy. Birds sing alleluia the only way they know.

Cemetery where no one goes. Deer hooves of hearts pounded into ground. Turning, the earth. Pebbles of particular shapes, colors. Tintinabular, the rushes grow decapitated. An array of eels. The ivy winds about its throat.

Mailbox with its lids slightly unopened. Windows winnowed from its old house, glass yet unbroken. Where the weeds won't grow. Footpath treads across the field dividing it into one. And another.

Insomniaries. The rise of the fall. Sphinx candle. Dogs asleep on their backs in the sun. Yesterdays devoid of tomorrows. Candelabrum decorated with seashells, onyx in retrograde. Emery board. The how of
now. Contrails of the ocean crystalline. Cats where their footprints roam. An orrery made of tin, mold.

Patinas and disregarded waylays of glances. The 5th element of leaves. Ocean eroded to shore.

Chrysanthemums of the sea. The shock of after. In the magpie’s nest, cigar bands. And the moss, resisting; red.

At the gate, bottles with cut lips. Crypts of grass cuttings. Moth wings. Stationary weather front. Still a front. At the gate, a trail worn thick. Strands of birch. Playing cards wet and mangled in alleys, no jokers. At the gate, a gate. Handles, pulled. Insouciant. Towards a line of people bent on waiting. At the gate, a passage to. Through the gate: changeling of fences.
Then it was snow. Morning dove telling its story, same old same old. A cat last seen. Where-
about. Scented air distinctly not of rain or its infatuation with metal. For when the glove
is not on, it mimics:
pause; not being a hand.

Balls from sycamores drop, fuzz to be kicked around. Aren’t any buses today, just their sounds.

That the wishing-back-for is a prelude to come. To the vernissage of soil, welcome. Locks on
door handles, trinkets which let it be. Configuration of spit and the walkway is made of
tombstone. Granite by another name is akin to granite. Exposition, however permanent is a displaying of mostly frames. Walking to the beach head
to catch a school of waves. The end is an end and the beginning is a false start, towards
making ends, meet.

Results are incomplete. Cave of resonance and paintings of shadows. Filth resides in stair
corners, ledges to not be stepped on, another form of breeding. Old women place what’s left of themselves
in stockings that won’t stay taut. Safety pins unlatched, sharply gleaming. Musical clock never
misses a tune, wound. Ashtray
with a spade imprint. Still no one knows why the murderer has done what is, what continues,
to be done.

For instance, this. Technically, we don’t know. A planet may resemble ours: the how and the when why and the how, the how and its aftermath. Subsiding, tide leaves presents of polished stones it worked so hard to accomplish, then throw away. Seagulls signal bad weather, but they don’t mean to. Voice of the immediate past is distant, rocking chair when its resting. Clouds another form of ash. We forget the mementos.