1970

Corpse and Beans, or What Is Poetry?

Bill Knott

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview
Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
THE UNIVERSITY ABANDONED OVERNIGHT

This is the university abandoned overnight. A few years ago they all left one night, students, faculty, administration. No-one knows why, and it has remained a mystery. People keep away, with rumors of being haunted, et cetera. I like to walk here at night. The complete echoes between the science plaza, the practice-fields, dormitories, classrooms, the millions of books in perfect alphabetical order. Everything is intact and repastful. This could be the night before the night they left. I keep walking, maybe I was a student or teacher here but it doesn’t matter. Memories, even if true, would be out of place here. This is the university abandoned overnight, a perfected and necessary legend.

CORPSE AND BEANS, OR WHAT IS POETRY?

I sit at my table and sometimes the question of poetry crosses my mind. For example: The man who one night ate a big plate of beans then got tired of everything and killed himself. Next day at the burial everyone said, what’s that noise? Was it poetry?