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[Born into the Wry, Eocenic Tomfoolery of A]

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Two Poems · James Solheim

Born into the Wry, Eocenic Tomfoolery of a Kemmerer, Wyoming Magician’s Family, He Managed a Third-Decade Translation in His Love of Place, Discovering in Shadow-Striated Bank Beneath the Scaling Redwoods an Inverse and Balance to the Buttes with Their Fossil Fish Like Stamped-Out Souvenirs (Which in Fact Often Became Souvenirs, Giftshopped Among Taiwan Tommyhawks, Hand-Tall Gag Outhouses, Fawn-Topped Pennybanks (“I Am Just a Little ‘Dear’/But I Can Cure Your Woe/If in This Slot / Upon My Top / You Drop Some of Your ‘Doe’”))—and So Yosemitted, Miles from Home, He Learned the Life of the Purely Vertical, Mediating for Three Decades Between Park and People, Never Once Cursing the Familydad Working a Nabisco Sugarwafer Out the Top of a Car Window in the Hope of Receiving on the Glass a Venezuela of Bearslobber (Seal of the True Yellowstoneer (Our Friend Worked Yellowstone a Decade Too)) or the Kid Keeping a Too-Small Trout on a Stringer Made from an Old Strip of Cloth and Some Wire (But Neither Was He the Gull of Poachers), Finally Dying Slumped Bearlike into the Top of an American Garbagecan and Then Buried Earthwise (Backhoe Chopping Through Shale) in His Beloved Ranger’s Uniform, Green with the Tall Yellow Pine His Epaulet: His Final Wish Thus Bringing Oneness from His Two Loves, as if Death Had Produced His Only Child

archaic feasts, beneficences
    blackballed!
America in your car
    beneath the rickety, dissembling, and
waxes of the god
the tree was dragged to the pep rally, where effigied abstractions died in foreign jerseys, lynching become shrieky teen expression. The next ears and sealants for the millionth buttprint in (we must cover great realms to get there, so I can’t tell you more) the thirty-second kid a datum and others (looking down past the distended belly she saw the earlier child panicking with a chip of salt)—therefore

Baxter? and thus the child entered school for the first time, carrying his dear little naptime mat. Upon his return home he discovered the great elm gone, the fractured light into which his ball often twirled now chainsawed and dragged cabled to the pep rally bonfire by a large truck notable for its thick hair of grease

It was desert there weren’t many elms but did the little nursemaid know great bears walked earth then years later

and he saw it— “that awkward aeon” of tangerine light, of lemonade rooms, Fred pronounced “dreadful” it was a basement room, or air thick with mold’s coughed aether on your collar and the lonesome dorm room was fishy with light— remember this phrase: “radio—that fringed anesthetic”; that night he twirled through the static fizz to his favorite show, last of the dramas, forgotten on some vertigoed corner of the electromagnetic
spectrum where the top forty wouldn’t fit—and the show wasn’t there, so it meant his parents were dead and he was on this ripped island of college in the dark, the last place left in the universe, “w/”

industrial nostalgia

Beetles roared
over the dead squirrels, those heavy texts
of the highway
like mink stoles floating above drowned socialites
“Hell,” he said—beefing it
Merrimac had it and the man’s secret decoder visor
expeshally for card playing
ruddy
grooved
and the old photos showed a big elm’s shadow
across his cowboy legs, giddy Crockettiong child
wavering in shadowstrands, the light too gritty
in him as if he knew the elm would be energy

“WILD LIFE BALLOGIST!”
it was like they’d never heard of biology
there
in the tan neutral shale, chipping souvenirs out of rock (just right to put on decorative gold stands
(his father always wore goggles: “a rock chip in the eye is painful, son, right painful.” Do you understand syllogisms
jasmine is affected by syllogisms, this is a fact
of the great apes who will roam between them
aerosol rabbits
flings they had had had had bad vibes
he stated reluctantly, stroking his small, round goatee:
that winged etymology
heretofore referred to as ‘a = a + 1’
the will being unwrapped of a decorum

Yogi and Booboo, “yr” (yer) friends
he had to learn the wild order, which was not
sweet or decimated—and thus he had: had learned the straying of beef, the beef of the bear’s hug, how to allow the metal intrusions of use in certain sectors, erecting barriers which could be traversed only through dedication and knowledge and proper forms seat of the intellect
(This is all very smart and sensible.) and the gun emerged ever so slowly, parting the red velveteen curtains like a liver the small man who loved scars erector sets cracked “allover” he jinked—

Cornish couples combat it names were locations—eating the map, he quickly stoked her languishing nipples— and the Men in her blood began their march red and puckered, he fell to those mumblety declensions of the bestroked, talking like Gene did if you recall, out of one side of the mouth, the other pulled slack, and soon he could say nothing, submitting to lukewarm couch baths in which she petted him like a porpoise (he had become that alien) but neither of them were unfulfilled, gross, or humiliated, bodymaintenance quickly becoming comfortable act (anything can become comfortable (and how quickly!) in love), she humming with that abstracted cheerfulness as she rinsed him (he aware of vague bears, and of someone far off stroking him (which was like hearing distant waves repeated till subliminal), he also half-thinking—or one-tenth-thinking, or one-twentieth—himself back at the park one sun-day, the gray small sculpture of a chewing gum balanced on his lip, his arm around her by the Chevy))

America in carnauba
indefatigable