New Poems

Robert G. Brown

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Short Poems
Fire

The center of self is like fire
Turns hours into ashes with flame
Its spark is the heart of desire
It gives to the shadows a name.

Logic

Ergo, therefore, and quod erat D
All this logic just stupifies me...

The Lady in Black

Evil visions often repel the eye
Inner spirit trying to cast out dark
Although the light thus grasped is but a lie
Filled with shadows thrown where they leave no mark.

Each eye has its blind spot where they gather
A hole in space and time it cannot see
Where they lurk to tease the blinded caster
With wakeful dreams of horror yet to be.

The Lady in Black glides through the room
My eyes almost catch her, but slide to the side
Her presence presages the advent of doom
The Lady in Black glides down the hall
Unnamed Fragment (unfinished)

Across the quiet meadow comes the sound of tinkling bells  
Where the cows are plodding home  
And wander through the swaying swells  
Of hay gone golden in the sun  
So bright that all the colors run.

The darkling sky goes blue to black  
But rimmed with ruddy fire bright  
Off to the west, the distant west  
Where sun last slipped away from sight.
Longer Poems

The Old Dog

The old dog is dead.
Laid down its burden
Along with its head
And died.

I cried, for I loved her
For all of her barking,
Her messes, her nose thrust
Upward into my waiting hand.

How grand she was as a pup,
Rolling in filth to stink;
Tireless she ran to fetch
The next thing she would chew.

She grew to fat and placid,
Slow and full of love
Faithful and true she would lie
Close by my side as I worked.

Now I work, digging her grave
Her body close beside me
For the last time.

The old dog is buried now
Deep within the loam
Just beneath her favorite spot
Where the winter sun warmed
And the trees shaded in summer.

Perhaps a new tree will one day grow
From some acorn dropped
By squirrel once chased, roots twisting
Through ribs, skull filled with dust.

She would like that.
Let Us Go

“Blue bugs, blue bugs! Help me,
Kill the blue bugs! They are
All around me, on the floor,
Up the wall, on the door!
Blue bugs!” cried
My eighty-nine year old grandmother
To a scared twelve year old me
Who’d come to her cries
And just couldn’t see
Blue bugs anywhere . . .
In panic she looked with watery eyes,
Old legs a—tremble with fear
At the clean walls, bare floor of her room
Her thin legs swathed in cotton against the chill.
Later, my mother, Christine cried
When grandmother, confined in bed,
Called her by dead Dess’s name
And rambled through the past,
Jumbled images cast inside
A swiftly fading frame.
Grandma was long since gone
Beyond where we can know,
And while we took care
Of her body for years
When it failed, we let it go.
Father chose to die at home, of cancer slow
And painful through the end.
But brave was he, the fires of his mind
Burning clear and low, even as his last breath
Sighed from his blued and shrunken lips.
His life—love, Mother, lingers still,
Diminished and aging,
Waiting for his call. In dreams he tells her,
“I’ll be back for you. I will!
Fear nothing, nothing at all.”
Her instructions to us are strict:
“When nothing remains but the guttering glow
Of Self, when my body’s a husk bearing ashes
— For God’s sake, let me go!”
My wife’s a Doctor now, you see,
She cares often for the elderly.
She brings home many a tale, weeping
For her job is full of woe.

She tells of reviving ancient ladies
Filling them again with life and breath.
Full of cancer, demented and frail
Eager to pass beyond this pale
They are held helpless by those who do not know
Life from Death.

She jolts their weakened, failing hearts,
With electricity
Intubates them, starts a drip to fix
Their body chemistry
Hot wires old motors to one more start
Full of agony.

She used her tools
In a million dollar medi-tech show
All because a “loved” one stood close by
And would not let them go.

To fear death is to fear life;
Our culture denies
Death its place, until life itself
Is made mockery. Consider

The truth. A religion that still bears scars
From the loss of political franchise,
That loudly claims in writings revered
That life is a spirit, and flesh
But a treefall in forest
Sustained by the Mind of God,
*Insists* that the breath
Be maintained in the flesh
Long after that spirit has fled
And God has turned his Mind elsewhere.

This is called “Respect for life.”

Count the cost.
To sustain the machine,
Riddled with cancer, assaulted by stroke
Demented and in pain,
While the rooms of the soul
Are emptied by nightmares
And the only sounds therein
Are distorted echos from the past,
We spend the wealth that would enrich
The life of a child.
Yes, we are a culture of Ghouls,
Worshippers of Death, not Life
For men always worship that which they fear.
We pay penance for our sins
Repairing the heart and lungs
Rebuilding the kidneys ruined
Nurturing the scrap of liver left
All but destroyed by decades of drink,
Smoke,
Food,
And even love and laughter.
It seems that Life is a deadly sin
And painful Death the atonement.
Other cultures, rich with wisdom,
Don’t fear Death.
“I have lived a life,”
Say the Hopi, the Navajo
As they embrace Death as a friend.
“Life is the Art of Dying”
Says the East.
Bedtime

Can she hear my thoughts, I wonder
As we nestle like spoons, me tucked up behind
Our soft breath in repose belies
The burning flame that glows in my mind.

My hands on her back caress her spine
While she reads her book with happy sighs
Our legs beneath the sheets entwine
Her curves all pressed up to my thighs.

Our children home and safe in bed
The dogs lie sprawled upon the floor
And all that’s evil in the world
For now abides outside our door.

The calmness of the scene conceals
The raging storm, the furnace fire,
A silken sheath for piercing light
A rising tide of hearts’ desire.

Our passion mounts along a road
Well trod, but still no garden flight
With trails that twist to craggy peaks
Where secret blossoms scent the night.

We climb together the perilous path
Pass the panther, elude the snake
Dance along the delicate edge
Soar above the canyon and lake

We reach the top still hand in hand
Our face alit by falling star
And sleep together on the sand
Of time, revealed for who we are.
Reason and the Will to Fight

The issue is simple, so don’t get confused
We don’t fight for God; it’s not a “Crusade”
We fight for sweet reason and won’t be refused
By those that fear reason still more than a blade.

It’s reason that tells us that women are free
To choose for themselves how to dress, what to learn
Who to marry (or not), when to worship, how to be
Not chattel to purchase, to beat or to burn.

It’s reason that tells us that men are free too
But not free to end freedom and not free to kill
So stand on street corners and preach ’til you’re blue
But cherish forever the listener’s free will.

It’s reason that tells us that it’s wrong to compel
The worship of God by torture or death
One man’s road to heaven is another’s path to hell
God gave the right to choose along with the breath.

It’s reason that tells us they haven’t the right
To tear down the graceful towers in murderous glee.
It’s foolish to blame us now for taking the fight
To those cowards that began it and now hide and flee.

Do they take us for fools who will stand still to die?
Do they think we won’t act to defend all we love?
Do they think we’ll permit them to win with a lie?
Don’t they know there’s a dragon inside of this dove?

We’ve long since rejected the right to rule of kings,
Of old myths and fables, of the wicked and the strong.
We’ve bled to end slavery and equalize all things
So all who live may choose, and all who live belong.

God damn them for killing in a travesty of blame
God damn them for claiming to kill in Allah’s name
God damn as well the evil of their medieval cause
With its wicked heart of hatred and its tyrannical laws.

So it’s off to war to fight for peace
To fight for the right to choose
To fight for a dream
To fight for a cause
To fight so that evil will lose.

Yet spare in your prayer a word for the weak
A thought for the poor fools we fight
And vow that this time when we come out on top
We’ll put a permanent end to the night.
In Bethelehem

In Bethelehem, a brother born
Was claimed a King on Christmas morn.

But Kings no longer haunt the world
Their bloody battle flag is furled
The people of the world all free
To speak their mind, to disagree
To recognize reality.

A King of Kings rules only One,
Himself. Each human thread is spun
Separate, forseen with God’s eyes,
Naked of words and world’s disguise
To make a self-willed tapestry

Where every thread imparts its hue
As it is warped the fabric through
And helps decide the patterned weave
That its brief span will finally leave
On the loom of human history.

True wisdom is to see this sight;
The finished cloth in perfect light
With vision clear of gauzy thread
That clings to each and every head.
Awake! Awake! Humanity.
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