

(a poem sampler from)

Looking at Tree Bark

by

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Stop Bus, Stop

Once again with eyes rubbed red
within the silence the child sits

The parent sits secure and uneasy
fresh from release once again

An offer from a bribery filled bag
as they wait for the bus—to stop

Turning back and forth and back
the small and agitated feet dangle

Anchored legs offer no support
but cross back and forth and back

A condemning eye upon a snuffle
as they wait for the bus—to stop

Nothing is said by anyone else
and no one dares look at them

Cigarettes push out from the bag
four eyes spot a bus to free them

But the number is wrong so they
will wait for the right bus—to stop

Double Reflection

Not another day, but another writing
attempt to find the poem I thought I had
found amongst the quiet of “Bryant Park”

Behind the New York Public Library this
is where I became aware of that changed
voice I didn’t expect but there it was and is

So write I do and today the need pulls me
along no matter what I use to distract the
images that have not found the paper yet

Knowing how they call to be released the
voice calls out one line and then another
weighing and moving on word after word

I stop at a bookstore and the voice stops
distracted by others’ words yet these words
come back again when back on the street

The voice looks for the paper, where is
the paper, I need the paper yet the voice
in my head moves on word after word

Not wanting the voice I move quickly but
to no avail as it hounds and haunts my soul
yet it is my friend and my very breath

Soliloquy

To build or not to build—that is the question.
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
the slings and arrows of financial collapse
or to takes arms against free market delusions
and by supporting our own—end them.

To die, to sleep, no more and in our sleep
to say we end the heartache of the thousand
unnatural shocks Wall Street is prone to. 'Twas
a consumer-nation devoutly self-reliant.

But now, to die, to sleep, to sleep perchance
to dream of days of yore. Ay, there's the rub
for in this sleep of trade imbalance what
nightmares have come as we have shuffled
our factories off to slave-mongering shores
coiled for shareholder's profits—no pause for
humanity, a calamity for generations to come.

For who can bear the whips and scorns of
Wall Street recklessness, the oppressive
trade deficit, our willful ignorance, the insolence
of political party collusion and the spurns
of our impatient, unworthy, empty, outsourced
economy? Then we ourselves can not our
quietus make—due to a bare bank-vault!

Who would these fardels bear to grunt
and sweat under this collective madness
but that the dread of something worse
than death—the multinational company
whose shelves bring only debt—puzzles
the consumer and makes us bear cheap
items at big box stores rather than fly to
'American made' which we know not of?

Thus ignorance will make paupers of us all.
And thus the native hue of totalitarian
resolve has sicklied o'er with a pale cast
our thoughts on freedom and our lack of great
enterprise buries this moment of our stupidity
to regard their products—which are turned
against us, as we lose the name of consumer.

The Merger, or What Some Might Call It

It is inevitable I suppose as we want to think the best of them
But of course we don't want them to shut down the government
The first time it can be fun to watch their scripted performances
We cross our fingers and await the hoped for eleventh hour reprieve
By about the fifth time it is annoying to watch their performances
As we know the eleventh hour reprieve will miraculously appear

The media gives everyone a front row seat for Debt Ceiling Theater
Our politicians put on this show—to show how hard they work, for us
What do you think—is our spiraling out of control trade deficit a problem
The politicians scream bloody murder about raising the debt ceiling
But when it comes to the actual trade deficit—they never mention it
If they are not concerned why should any of us bother to be concerned

As long as we can get credit as a nation, our debt has no meaning
We can thank the Chinese for this, who have been carrying our debt
They have carried our debt since we normalized trade with them
We normalized trade with them—so they could join the WTO
They assure us they're not a totalitarian regime and they are our friends
They put us in debt and we pay interest, on our interest on that debt

Still at some point shouldn't we try to bring the trade deficit down
Though no Democrats and no Republicans ever talk about doing this
There are no concerns here whatsoever for the Republicans
There are no concerns here whatsoever for the Democrats
And this isn't a big business merger so we have nothing to fear—whatsoever
So this must be a good thing because these politicians work, for us

The Democrats genuinely oppose the Republicans (on many wedge issues)
And the Republicans genuinely oppose the Democrats (on many wedge issues)
We know we can trust our politicians, as this isn't a Presidential debate
And we know we can trust our politicians, as this isn't scripted theatre
Democracy has always been sacred here or it use to be or maybe it once was
But their two-party collusion—of silence on the trade deficit—is not what it is