

Mainly Black



Works

by

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[Vida Loca Books](#)

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Strobe Lights at Midnight

His touchpad was eating his fingers. Already down
to the second knuckles, they left bloody smears
on the keys. Pizzicato strings nearby.

Madcap insurance adjusters left no steins undrained:
oompah, oompah, oompah-pah. Unparalleled
pungencies renamed in honor of lesser Greek godlets.

Filling the roads with their blurs, euphoric equestrians
sniffed at their parachutes. Under the rubric
of another invasion, ragamuffins all.

(for Peter Ganick)

The Japanese Lunchbox Hoax

Suddenly, he said, "I've already
explained her fixed red scowl,
so let me tell you about
the Japanese Lunchbox Hoax."

Must have been years and years ago
that I met her, heard her say
something amusing about him that
I could possibly repeat before

children. Announcing the arrival
of the hat, officials lapsed into
uncomfortable silence, not
the usual down-draft of platitudes.

His thigh, so hard and dry, I thought
I might choke on it. His sister
smirking just past the horizon we'd
last crossed. One of those

black Quink bottles folks would
stop by just to admire and dip
their pens in. Sibelius's
worst piece ever? Night Ride

and Sunrise, I heard him say.

Arrivals

When we arrived, negotiations were already
underway. Even so, we spent several minutes
outside, sitting in the car with the windows
rolled down, listening to the barking dogs.
Light critters' epiphanies, redressing the sins
of their parents, Van Morrison fans to the end.

Scuffed-up vocabularies off-loaded by dawn,
our undisgraced crew prepared to be boarded by
local constabulary. Contextual cuts in the bills
of lading led to questions, prolonged toe-tapping.

Sharp curve up ahead. Time to apply for asylum?

(for Bob BrueckL)

My Tiny Humble

Analyzing more closely, machines that exist
only on paper, overdue books from some library,
just as though inside my head.

Mews infected with anthrax were just what
we needed. From childhood, indeterminate goals
yawned before him. Mostly imbued with

feeling. Responding to her cheeriness
as well as her expressive triceps, I took to
writing outdoors, well away from the barricades.

(for Jukka-Pekka Kervinen)

Meditation F

Bums with religion, found
all over the world, notable
for their absence, abandoned

hillsides. On safari in deepest
Pennsylvania, cars running
on wheels of Samsāra.<sup>[T
S]</sup>

Synthetic revisions dashed
off amid personal drift. Time
to step on the gas, if you

have the heart to. The road
to Altoona, as good a place
as any to be lightened up.

Critique

I was swept into a surrealistic work
by some jack-of-all-trades, a macabre
collage of spontaneous gestures anchored
in explosive words like “POW,” “CRUNCH,”
“KABOOM.” Youthful pizzazz, often found
lacking in his later works, given free rein.

More perfect marriage, something to be sought
after years of imperfection. Swirls of paint,
some sort of wicked improvisation.
Notions of progress, our most imperfect product,
little sense of light, of dark.

Pieces more mischievous than accusatory
scampered up and down the keyboard, until,
in the privacy of her bathroom, she found
vicious punch lines in my most casual remarks.

Meditation WX

Mixed up, always,
uninhibited with
uninhabited.

Unperforated people
ardent as ever
tucked into a file

folder with other
spent mail, a band
donned regalia

unseen, parasitical.
Peoria's there, right
where we left it.

Oud, Oud, Damned Spot

Drummy asks a good question: weather or knot
Arabian horses derive from Abraham's bo'sun.
Standing up for thing we would (ab)normally not

stand for, we, the aforementioned, brook no
infringements on our indigestible poverty
rights. Notional propensities, notwithstanding.

(for Alan Sondheim)

Meditation DLV

Rare earths
remain rare
and normal

times are here
to stay, unless
. . . unless

Rare events
not all that
unusual

after all is said
and sad and
done

Midnight Mass

Not enough evidence to draw
any conclusions. At the end of the sermon
we all sang a hymn. Arguments
tested our faith. Passions and intellects

stood test of time. We narrowed
our focus. Incurably rational,
terribly sorry, furious as all get out.
Church, mosque, or synagogue.

Something else going on.
No obvious reason.

In Memoriam David Markson

No one is living in the Louvre.
One never does solve what it is about watching fires.
I bring this up just in passing.
The name of the river at Hisarlik is Scamander.
Shostakovich. Or *Lucia di Lammermoor*.
While I was peeing, I thought about Lawrence of Arabia.
Utrillo's father may have been Renoir.
Music is not my trade.

(being several sentences from his *Wittgenstein's Mistress*, slightly altered or not at all)

Meditation KFN

Everything you've
ever thrown or
thought you threw

or else were just
suspicious of,
musclebound as

ever, landed
somewhere over there,
beyond that pail.

Tropismes

There you are again, simple choices
by way of explanation. A closer look
revealing almost nothing.

Carrying across a range of contexts
some semblance of yourself.
Shattered glass, unrecognizable
patterns on the roadway.

Wanting something enough to take
steps to get it.

Humoreske

Are we inside the frog or outside? To say the least,
it makes for diverse and enjoyable living.
Just off the road to

wherever it was we were going,
very few poets, reading over
your shoulder. Transformed pre-trance

formations, the first I'd ever
heard of. Natural dis-
inclinations.

Marginally pond-bound
exceptional infur-
iations.

Dark Matter

Missing mass is no laughing matter,
rasped the brown dwarf priest.

Weak interactions
suggest discrepancies

such as black holes that hang out
on the outskirts of town,
where scientists like school-
boys playing hooky

toss theories back
and forth.

Bitter Ends

In Munich, things pretty much came
to a standstill, awaiting further
confirmation. Given recent developments,
including the unexpected non-renewal

of my contract, even the English
drew shorter straws than usual.
Flexibility and artistic vision,

high levels of respect and a deep
affection, which may or may
not have been sincere.

Strategie

narco top-hats would
go down into chromium
space hole where

no recent activity
to speak of interfaced
terrifications, glassy

eyed as always
beneath a city interfaced
with purified bubbles

bleeding straws in
nodule baths

for Lanny Quarles

Mystère

Fakes, for example. What do they portend?
Conventional anthromorphs? Passages
from the Den of Daniel? Phantasmic spaces

wrested from utopian wreckage? Trying
to find our way in the darkness.
To figure out some conception of divine

ruination. A primary mimesis, but one
belonging to someone else.

Moth

Drawn to the darkness
ignoring--often--the moon.

Opus Posthumous

In lieu of possible debts awaiting repayment
or rebundling, some need to compensate others
for whatever it was they had lent. A wealth

of nations, revaluing their currencies--upward
or downward, whichever hurt less, or more.
Some rejected mishmash of arbitrators' notes

and suggestions, interweaved with utterly
irrelevant reminders of this, of that, of
the other. Handwritten on paper.

In der Nähe des Bahnhof

Something is just around the corner
from the train station but I've
never been able to find it.

It was always *jetzt um die Ecke*
as the Germans or Austrians usually
seemed to say when I was asking

for directions to wherever
I happened to want to go, to see,
to be at the moment.

Several passersby, asked the same
question, would nod or point
in different directions. After a time

I made it a practice to ask at
least five people where it was,
whatever it was, and then I would

go in the opposite direction from
the one most often suggested. This
seemed to work, almost always.

Bitte, wo ist ein Krankenhaus? I would
ask, just to see the flicker of concern
that would vanish as quickly as

it had appeared. But half of them,
halfway down the block, would
turn to see if I had headed

in what they'd thought, or told
me, was the right direction.
And I would tip my hat

and wave them off to wherever
it was they were going for
whatever reasons they

had for going
there.

Note:

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