

Night Thoughts from Somewhere Past High Noon

Roadwork everywhere, jackhammers nattering on
like mosquitos escaped from a drive-in schlockflick.
Call it a day the late sun says but then lingers
lightly on the western porch like some bright-eyed guest
reluctant to depart and you can see why, having
been all day struck by its riveting midsummer
rise, the light insistent on its own absolute
rectitude, poised for hours against that slow plunge
towards the smoulder of old midwinter moonshine—
that the sky god will rise again—as yes it will,
unlike me, say, whose turn comes only once,
no matter what our phallic fables might pretend.
I solve the sphinx's riddle merely by living
the answer, hoping to carve my initials *scritch-*
scratch-scratch in the thick-skinned world I happen through,
thinking hell they'll last like eximious dinosaur
shit, but knowing the numbers tell a different tale.
Midsummer's where I am and lingering on the porch—
downhill from here, the easiest leg, though hardest
on the knees; their bent gets awkward all the time,
but nothing that good shoes, aspirin, and surgery
can't delay till Hamlet in hiking boots mutates
into this slow-mo Lear doing Tai Chi barefoot
on the heath beside that nipped and tucked and still (thanks
to pharmaco-chemistry) well fucked Tony and Cleo.
You go gently guys! the heckler in my brain yells,
teenaged even now, addled with its own juice.
I love my life like sunlight, oysters, and the dulled
pain of dental surgery, but know that the fat
hump of irony which adorns my hairless back
will not keep the coffin lid from closing down, down,
or stop the hearse's jaunt the way roadwork just might.

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