

1 Don't  
2  
Dancing  
3 Me

RyanThoreson  
Carson

Don't  
Watch  
Me  
Dancing

RyanThoreson  
Carson

for the usual

So  
this is the  
new  
year  
but  
I don't feel a-

-ny different<sub>1</sub>

everything the machine says is conceit  
that being said, joe tells me that the earth is a machine.  
is that to say that the only way that we can be free, truly free  
is to advance the machine to the point where it can monitor the  
machine that is the earth?

every year is a birth but what is the year to earth  
but being exactly where you were  
to return so often is to never leave,  
aware of the expanding loom of being back

i should be at the poetry project. Its new years day,  
but i am away and counting popcorn kernels on the floor,  
some that have bloomed  
from hibernation,  
they would be the one's at the poetry project.  
i've been told that awayness is nothing  
its much like falling in the well  
in that nothing could be like  
falling in the well  
in the lit metropolitan valleys inhaling the ghosts  
my new years resolution is to not fall in the well but to drink  
from it slowly  
and rub it on my pores and complain about a lack of water in  
the well  
all this splashing falling in the well  
this metaphorical, but occasional  
very real and serious falling in the well.

i joke that the sewer is the well of the city inversed  
the sewers fill with ghosts, as the riders of the ma-  
chine wake and giggle and hiccup  
until splashing the exorcism of the year and it splashes on  
your glasses or eyelashes

the city is a swift breath of opaque accordion chords in the  
floral streets  
in the bath of the roman candle light over the irish catholic  
church in the night  
and my new years resolution was not to smoke or get sucked  
into political conversations  
with strangers and I am already breaking both right now but all  
the radios are counting down  
there's always a new leader of the free world, but usually they  
don't hold office  
but they don't come around every eight years and I'm tired of  
there still being more years

i know it seems dramatic, but I'm always a crisis  
to be here under the big sky that will be gone  
not the sky which continues to be the sky grazing  
the horizon, but new York, which sinks below the skyline

# Steps<sub>2</sub>

shelley fucking died  
on the beach for all our poems  
or a liquid sigh.  
Look with us becomes  
look as us. father figures  
as listless as absence  
is present. I lure  
the horizon, which was lent.  
I tongue sediment  
off each fingernail-  
and transfer them to parchment  
so those cells may wail.  
there may now be pavement  
but our pores all lament.

# General Strike<sup>3</sup>

the horizon was sputtering pink  
milk revelations across our  
eyes. iridescent flesh taught not  
jumbled as the script may  
day act to remove  
nails from my wrists  
hissing and biting belt  
that you unceremoniously

removed as screws came  
lose my path through the  
way your vowels trickle  
plasma leeching your poetry  
through the bass lines of memo  
or he will lash  
and garner himself with

her syllables

# VA Hospital Courtyard<sup>4</sup>

sitting in a lavish garden  
lingering in the yelp of passing  
existential, bombastic jargon.  
immaculately constructed cities of sound amassing

lingering in the yelp of passing  
mere existence is remarkable,  
immaculately constructed cities of sound amassing  
syllables quaking in a mind, unavailable

mere existence is remarkable  
sonics shaking cells to the point of disbanding  
syllables quaking in a mind unavailable.  
chords exploding nerve endings

sonics shaking cells to the point of disbanding  
reverberations cracking in stillness  
chords exploding nerve endings  
body crumbling trying to will this

reverberations cracking in stillness  
sitting in a lavish garden  
body crumbling trying to will this:  
existential, bombastic jargon.

# Sickly Thestled<sub>5</sub>

thickly settled in thistles  
navigating surf  
of the steps to the F train  
neglecting in thistles narrow  
margins, sonic traffic  
in transit between hardwood  
floors and granite soles

sitting luxuriously  
chewing apple savoring voraciously  
watching your post bed's duster  
in lunar liquid watching  
your harvest moon  
teeth like firecrackers

I'm draining in fluorescence sitting  
on murray street in a stable  
or under verandas watching  
nicotene articulate  
your syllables into nouns  
and your lips opening  
to reveal a hallucination  
of mermaids suede and swaddled

us in dresses

the psychology of business  
day is sickly thestled in literature  
of manhattan lunch breaks  
but i'm gabbling about the analogous  
flock of new england  
geese honking the meeting  
halls and snow caught  
of my palm sized pond quacking  
shivering as soon as I linger  
in containing it

ladle the crystallized goose broth  
from my fingers gaping  
at an american flag tank  
top that is tickling  
my brain stem to shiver  
tempted to remember  
whether that was the night  
you were a handle with care sticker  
goading on my spine to groan

# The Humming Rock<sub>6</sub>

you're telling me in lemon sounds  
i'm asking about chiffon i don't know and you're telling me  
this stuff  
about cotton and i don't know but like i guess there's always  
a balcony right  
and yeah i guess it is  
literally just taking fragments from may '68 but

getting in a limo telling  
everyone  
yeah she's cute in that vaguely postmodern way  
you know like in that well should i tell her she shouldn't say  
she works on wall street?  
get me away from here i'm dying.

not biblical like sodom and gomorrah  
kinda way not the belle and sebastian  
some days i'm proanoid like  
rainbows  
proanoid like  
rainbows  
I take the train to west  
fourth and count the stars  
to be a poet is like being a writer.  
a poet is almost like a writer.  
in the current  
sociopolitical climate  
to be a poet is like a writer  
all i wish to recover  
of that which is irretrievably lost-  
rainbows

rainbows

rainbows

,the lorca allusions  
like being homesick



capitalism-  
love equals  
beauty beauty equals love  
love equals objectivity  
subjectivity equals beauty  
beauty equals objectivity  
equals love  
equals rainbows  
we hold values  
of beauty

i'm only antiquated by the number of lovers  
i've taken  
we are freer than those opposite us  
we are a poet  
almost like a writer  
so badly  
like kissing your sky-diving instructor  
making meaning  
or unmaking it  
went hand and hand  
with history  
art is the northwest passage  
manufacturing alienation

hannahs asking but what about bees what about nuance  
what about the definition of  
urban renewal what

about keeping your nose clean  
what about next what about next  
being in love with the modern moonlight what about  
removing the i entirely from linguistics  
then you can't die  
of man, whatever  
` no one writes them like they used to

about keeping your nose clean what about next what about next  
you're one of many

composing the self  
with cast off etceteras

listening to hospice and working in the hospice  
you're giving me this death rattle you're  
telling me that the space between the violin section  
is like how all the virtues are compatible  
to the discovery of adjectives in the shower

this party is pretty bourgie

but i'm still pretty into it

hockomock plaza

a gait like

a

ga  
ellez

just

nurturing

the hunt as  
the

marquis de  
sade

# Spine<sub>7</sub>

*"I tried to find my way into you  
and I couldn't. I tried to wander  
out but can't."*

—Jack Nachmanovich

lungs are vibrant. and what do cigarettes  
and serin have in common?

i'm just curious  
as to what my freedom is enduring

when my father tripped  
on the curvature of the Earth  
i gasped and watched  
as each disc of his spine  
fell into sand. i'm brave  
enough to talk about it  
but not brave enough  
to actively do a thing.

do you think frank o'hara ever wondered  
if his twinkling skyline was destroying  
a south american village  
in crescendos and lulls

my father returned  
from the war he told me  
about a little boy my age he had visited everyday  
in a groaning building.

suffering is real  
estate.

talking hoping  
syllables stick  
instead of just  
clattering  
to the floor again.

for years i've been trying  
to be a person who doesn't believe  
there's a time for war.

# the sky, but

8

*(A Derive)*

the east river is belching  
the memory of a thousand hands  
reaching. when i was ten i remember  
that a child hit the towers too-my age.

i remember wanting  
to feel like it was strange  
that someone so young  
could die.

when i saw photos of her i was struck  
she looked so much more american  
than the photos of other suffering children.  
now, watching the east

river wheezing at the clouds  
and a girl with pink hair  
is being filmed  
dancing.

# falling

shaking off. sliding into the waves holding.  
each name in my lungs.

i scream because i'm weary.  
i scream into the vacant sulfuric hollow  
once populated by fish.

i scream until my atoms shake  
and mutate and my gasps rattle  
each hydrogen molecule.

helicopter safety above me  
a couple beside me  
in passion under the same sky  
a little girl fell out of

gonna stare at this skyline  
and exhale all the pent up war  
poems and i sort of don't believe it  
but metaphors can be effective.

# My

# Year

# In

# Lists,

i want everything  
and two  
of some of this shit

sitting on this roof in these  
khakis and whispering that which will  
not be named compared with my tree  
eat my foot in his mouth  
swallowed my teeth

i'll sign  
your cast

iron skillet an unbearable  
breath in a galaxy of breath  
combined these molecules  
and named it  
:the universe  
in childhood  
bedrooms and named it  
:the constellations

this advertisement  
in times square

correcting the sky  
editing the soil  
scraping and listening  
to the poet

what's your favorite  
food and what's your favorite hair  
where's the room with all the mirrors

and now I have this one  
summoned from the gyrations of a couple  
that communicates  
cell phones  
in this restaurant

excuse me

excuse me I'm just  
going to move

my body a bit

please, don't watch me dancing

you took my hand and made me swimming  
pool out my hair and draped  
vodka on my lashes  
and asked me to blink.

blink out the seconds  
it took the moon to reach  
my fingernails

i lost my voice.

hockomock plaza a gait  
like a gazelle just nurturing  
the hunt as the marquis de sade

wearing a blue  
collar in the hopes of relating  
to pavement

my hands:  
soft from impact

light wincing at grass

holding mouth in right  
palm tea leaves in another. floating.  
telos.

rubbing pavement  
feeling the air  
in each indentation and picking  
out new cones for my eyes  
so I can actually  
see myself

knotting

numerical

harsh tile

tautology:you and me  
so exotic as the tide  
lumbers to know me  
behind glass  
every lapsed moment exhaled sprinting  
to catch breathe

blooming fretful I'm only sleeping in a salt marsh and lapping  
stitches of earth, our ability to talk

ourselves as wrestlers

pulling the ribbons off each other  
let linger  
in brambles

shouting minimally incandescent  
bio-luminescence in every head

# Quarterly Yelps<sub>10</sub>

*After Bolano*

I.

the fact that there is a red  
guard in new york city carrying  
the quarterly yelps of the last roar  
of the yawp, entangled on the ashes  
of the cigarettes on the poets beholding  
new york city, that old bastion of civilization,  
you never glimpsed but you dreamed of in sweaty sheets  
of the senora desert placeless due simply to economic philosophy  
echoing in the halls of academia, but that you despised. civil.

yet destructive, as the impulse to write surely is.  
listening for crackles in the silence, the void where words  
could fall but are left imperceptible by the placeness,  
and the nausea to be literary.

eli is squelching in the kitchen of 953  
a headache that is never elapsing, a constant headache  
,if you will. the nausea of the quest,  
a monk playing the lottery for the scratching of nausea

II.

we're in the sands of drunkenness, stumbling and grasping  
at cattails  
hollering at the sky for reminding me of my size  
whatever, but my skin burns worse because i am drunk.  
oh the fight? don't even get me on the subject  
only literary in the way that to look at anything and to be  
moved to anger  
is to be a poet in America. to use one's will as language.

my vocabulary anthologizes me  
if there were a field here,  
holy shit would i lay in it



# Yard Work<sub>11</sub>

*For Ken Carson*

how could there even  
be another war  
after existentialism

water, a palette  
cleanser, but so is eighty  
percent of me

a drought so thick  
it cracks the gums  
in inhalation  
and the trees!

you're standing  
on the lawn  
just standing  
there with lip  
rehabilitating smiles

walking, leaves of grass

break each and watch  
as I watch my eyes follow  
it from the window  
and you pluck  
another

and you pluck                      another

and you pluck

Ryan Thoresen Carson is a poet and community organizer born in Massachusetts. His previous chapbook was *Bullhorns in Bed* (*Thistle Milk Press*). His work has appeared in *Maps for Teeth*, *All Stars*, and *Denim Skin*. He lives in Brooklyn, NY.

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is to be a poet in America.”**

***Best***

