

EARTH DAY SUITE

by Joseph Harrington

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Hello - Welcome to the Anthropocene!
You grew up in a different geological epoch,
so some of the elisions may be unfamiliar to you.

For instance: bumper sticker wants to know
do you have hope. Say No,
not that kind I don't,
but thanks.

For instance: you may ask yourself:
What's with the cloying pastels?
Fragrant crabs tumescent
tulips scummy duckweed:
all that reproduction for itself?

The poem does, too.
That is your task:
More golden-egg-laying
goose-killing

Children over water
fire fight

our children
grow old
sweating

houses flicker
people afoot in
groups moving

Rabbit climbs
the moon to set
his goddess up
against the dreory
troops

the kids are fine
 will be fine

If I imagined it
then it's a myth

If I can't imagine it
it isn't real

Babies occupy our time
while nature does its work on us.
Would you like eco-friendly or eco-regular?
I would like a reassurance please:
The cutest thing you ever saw.

(false indigo pods
shook into rattles

If you eat only one bowl of rice a day
you will get all the babies you want.
This is called the Law of the Blessèd Event.

If Earth Day's today what's tomorrow?

In another four days I'll be going like,
Arbor Day *already??*

Aw, shoot!

I should have planted a tree or something.

Let's go to the Tomb of the Unborn Leaf.

In complication of branches
still as a picture seen
through a window, active verbs
causing only karma —

an illness that cannot be named
an insult that cannot be named
a deity cannot be named —

the same robins make
the same yearly sounds
Stillness can only be seen

Soon each robin will seem
an unnamed bird of mine

“*Your bad data* caused
these gruesome rebirths! — ”

thus the personal gravity
sinks through the woof,
altering time spaces
your footnote, residue,
a missing tile-sliver
from a floor mosaic,
so that someone awakens
with orange on her sole.

I am a woman trapped
in the body of the poem
it makes an epigram of
my epitaph without me.

Woodpecker Man says “STOP!
I’ll pound your brains out, or else!” —
laughs that creepy vocalization
like an extinct cartoon
like the Lord God Elvis:
a woman’s figure with bird head
& claws, fiercely clutching eggs,
declaring: “The living now outnumber
the dead. . . . *We will devour them!*”

The dead experience
a deep memory
a fantasy of “off-spring” vaguely,
a semicolon + close parentheses =
eldritch disenheaded emoticon.

Plug in different data for a different writer:
Didn't you notice I'm invisible?
No one ever jumps facing
the open sea, no one hears
the past and present perfectly
conspire, part of the same ghost.

Decoy Canada goose —
why o why in a back yard
From a pear tree branch
from a thread of its own
mucus hung a dead slug
something writhing
out of its neck:
this is known as “The Real.”
(heaps of dead cave crickets
emerged from her throat
chirping “Alas, poor slug!” —
(really two slugs mating live —
entwined in their own
mucus, penises groping
out of necks, each looking
out to find an other

Since safety orange is become
a fashion statement,
I walk the woods content,
now knowing I shall ever —
“Feeding stations! Feeding stations! —
...Legacy warlords! Hold your fire!”
(unborn : preborn = undead : predead)
Aw, let the Pope shit in the woods,
if that’s what he wants to do,
deep in the dark incontinent.
Fucking *killivores* . . .

As the galaxies expand,
they become less funny.
So if "I Love Lucy" escapes
time-space, who knows who
will get it.

On Jupiter storms like this
fill up the size of the earth;
these storms fill up the earth
after storm after storm.

If the sky were really empty
it wouldn't kill
this jolly jupiter

“all stones keep records”
(duh)

but does Sisyphus remember
what he did to deserve it?

The how-ever bird —
he slew him.

The politics of colors:
dust over asphalt,
scraggly former buildings,
moraines sans plants —
hard-wired for green,
loaded for bear,
the red planet,
down on earth,
hemoglobin

watching the inbred animals
run against each other,
the girl would rather be cutting
her arms at home

while watching the earth's curve,
as though life were down there

rice rat, spiny pocket mouse,
burrowing newt, white-lipped
toad, a race things dream of

Goofy coots do the “coot scoot”
when spooked, utter Stooge-
Curly whoops: The Three Species
left in syndication
(there’s not a lotta ocelots,
nyuk nyuk nyuk)
brood parasites
communal defecators
oriole ore or sodalite song.
Integuments?
I’ve forgotten all the big words:
your fecunds your extirpateds

Write a sentence using
“flat-footed armadillo mosquito-pigeon”
& win our prize

& prise our wen —

Ouch! no stop it you're thinking

too much to win: write

from the body

if you want to live

you must breathe. OK OK OK —

Well, I prefer cultivars of hoary puccoon,
personally, to species varietals.

For “lifestyle style”

I checked:

“nihilism, upscale.”

Quantity: 1

Now everyone can relax,

write that poem about spring

Plant Life of the
Aeolian Sound Plain:
panamerican palmscale
zapata bladderpod
ashy dogwood
prostrate milkweed
desperate rose.

Red rose or white? =
live or dead,
no lily ungilded,
no border uncrossed.

Q: What is stopping sumac
from taking over the world.

A: Kudzu. Thank god
for sumac, Our Hope.

Thousands of gulls stream
over the fly-overs so
they know it's fall.

The gulls do not fall.
The fly-overs do not fly.

If I could make words into gulls
I would do so. It would not make
me God, but it would solve
many problems.

All my words would go
one way only, up.

The fly-overs are gulled.
The gulls fly over, and out —

(around the heat of the heart speak
plain words to be ignored

Sight cast to tailing reds
cross-hatching implies a net

Thick seagrass meadows
support double digit days

Vast unpressured flats
display a low lack of persuasion —

(a 25-inch west-side
caught on a popper

Every time a closing bell rings,
an angel gets his
chance to get away, lootless
as a ruptured duck on a dump,
a flushed pigeon under a kestrel's claw.
When I hear the words creative
destruction, I reach for my checkbook:
someone had better get ready to go.

But nothing says "Culture" in the heartland
like ballerinas in taffeta and men in tights.
The scrubby green stuff we call nature
recall as rendered
as needed
as if

Is Earth Day the New Christmas?
The gifts beneath the cut tree
decked in green and green
brought down the chimney by a G-d
who shall remain whoblivious.

The global confectionary landscape
The Planet of the Blondes
The bubble of the globe —
Don't laugh at the birds, it's unkind

The body of the Body
does not store energy
any more than anything else.
The board read Oct. 23, 1913,
20 minutes til 3. Many happy returns.

I've always said life =
a just bowl of cherries
most of us don't take notes
for an answer
those who live
after memory disaster
don't take it serious
it's too mysterious
Plain speakin plain folks
know the truth just
flew under our nose
when we see it.
The Mammal Brigade —
we're special, OK?
we're hurrying to finish up
before we die.

Are you shitting me? These animals are *people!*
They don't know a friend when they smell it.
We wrote them off a long time ago, actually,
not actuarially. C F I care.
Eat the wetlands, you bitter real estate elitists!
Eat thy wet heart out, thou holy simonist!
Fear Detection Center — Number One!
in protection of the centermost
center of Libraries.

And if I care, what then?
Shall we say, Whenever someone acts strange
look for the ear bud, the blue tooth?
What, then, Phaedrus, is a smile,
but a frown turned upside-down?
When you say Ideology, I already have.

We regret to inform you your
immortality expired. Human bodies
cannot bear too much reality.

hen bit june fee

The towels exist for my hands

The trees exist for the towels

Clean sun light light

My hands exist for make make

All those sad figures — what

do jesuses do?

That does it —

You're It now.

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