

Untitled

Baghdad

Poem

The lean wild dogs
 don't run the banks of the Tigris
 in the day light
 they stay hiding like cicadas
 in the rubble of
 last night's targets
 in unfinished construction
 and the half built promises
 shelter and pause before the gravity strikes
 at night they run the banks of the river
 crooning
 aboriginal
 inscrutable

As they sing the air raid sirens awake
 tax dollars and jet engines make you run
 to your balcony
 break out your Sony
 and attempt thin
 and one dimensional recordings
 of the city
 Allah retreats into the Euphrates
 As Jesus shapers Cluster Bombs

Baghdad is unstrung
 in a corset of sound
 murder and chaos are concussive
 they don't just shout in your face
 they grab you by the collarbone and blow into it
 the tune is so familiar

You want to leave your skin and your body behind
 what made you think you could do this
 put down your superficial electronics
 and be present
 the air bends more than it shakes
 it will push itself into everyday sounds
 car doors closing
 dishes breaking
 engines backfiring
 it will find ways to remain close to you
 camouflaged and close
 familiar
 for all your days

In Around 11:55 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 16, 1920, an old single-top wagon, drawn by an elderly dark bay horse, plodded westward on Wall St. It stopped about 75 feet from Broad St., near 23 Wall. Just over the rear axle was 100 pounds of TNT covered by 500 pounds of fragmented sash weights. More than 200 people were hurt and 30 killed when the bomb when exploded at 12:01 p.m. It was never determined who was responsible.

Angry men with agendas
 calmly attend classes at flight schools
 far far away

We define ourselves
 through pastels and irises
 the precision of need and pictures of grandkids
 duck-taped along the rails of our arms
 our definitions lost in rituals
 our rituals migrate to venus fly traps
 and dollar dollar bills
 consumption as religion
 and privilege as sanctuary

Our internal architecture is ancient rather than contemporary
 we will fill the spaces within ourselves
 or we will die trying
 every morning
 thousands of rituals of isolation
 crammed into minutes
 that seem too short and small
 working against each other
 but all trying to breathe the same note

The carbon dioxide of syncopation
 are these moments really too short
 are these familiar foot trails or are we just lost
 can the sum of us be contained
 in cotton sacks
 or the nap of a flag
 lost among 1000 choices
 and none of them good
 all the way from the west bank to the hood

Will we choose to be frank
 or just pretend we're not misunderstood
 how we fill in our blanks is ours to choose
 how we fill in our blanks is ours to choose
 our grief sits on a beach waiting all these years
 painting salt tapestries on our faces
 in the tracks of our tears

I regret I didn't honor you more when you were here
 I regret I did not honor you more when you were here
 I regret my hope wasn't greater than the sum of my fears
 I hope that sooner rather than later we stop grinding our teeth
 into these broken gears

My choices are greater 2 fools
 I'm going to honor your memory
 by letting my humanity break through
 the results of conflict are only celebrated by fools

I refuse to choose war
 I choose you

My choices are greater than 2 fools

I refuse to choose war
 I choose you
 I choose you
 I choose you



Jerry Quickley