



wyoming

Ken Taylor

on the books it's a weather day. but likely a permit problem. ranchers don't play. gate left open and several head got out. or a chopper parked on an off-limits field. weather doesn't shock here. you can see it coming for weeks. especially now. among the lower elevations. we take bets on rain. sleet. snow. down to the quarter hour. making TV predictions moot.

they have a word for someone tan with a pretty mouth explaining system dip. actor. model. whatever. bearing witness to simulated gusting. cameras swiveling up. if ratings slip, he'll quote-boost the dumpster fire to inflate acidic discourse. or parade a b-roll plea before they shoot. no matter. we're shut down. which leads to idle hands. which leads to peyote. not-jack is packing buttons. i snag a frisbee. we head along the healing plot off-road to before the common era. slice it up. mask the taste. get ready to puke.

prairie fire thrives here. classified as broomrape among the understories. the lack of a lower petal lip denies insects a perch and hides nectar rewards at the long end of tubes. the shoshone knew their showy cup-like bracts as love charm

food or poison against foes. depending on which end they used. last century schoolkids picked it as their wish for state flower. suppose to keep vampires away. just ask a hummingbird or bee.

whatever the physics behind the airfoil shape that describes a frisbee returning to its launch — reversed tear, map drop on a plug-in grid, method of broadcast beyond the power of talk — i don't try to catch it. the mescaline ride begun. the sun will soon set and this disc sings: *everything that curls your toes wants in. set loose your leaf-boats. turn the channel to flutes. tread near beholding.* to avoid treacherous ground i shed the sidekick me. my evil twin. unlink. recompose. my wake erasing evidence of before.

i've entered opaque flatness like a dream of a mad horse in clover. mindist. earthian. grappler. prone body in lieu of a plane to nurse perspective of the sagebrush steppe. i feel the eyes of pronghorn and other furtive life on the high desert. where wagon ruts remain between cedar rim thistle etched by pioneers traveling the oregon trail. killdeer and willets cry

from the shores of chain lakes. the great divide parts and reforms around me like clouds tumbling in timelapse. where arrows once fractured space from every bearing. small batching the quickest way to myth.

my head rests on the craquelure of a prehistoric fossil bed. performing a dirt nap. rare ending and the dense beginning in a landscape lit like scary vegas clowns on slots. souls are knit to pamphlets from an ancient inland sea. the devout union of thighs tamed by a temple priestess. my hands drip with roiling psychotropic kick-in. storming dominates my project. indelible fabrics send weavings to downwinders. i can suddenly speak low german: *wat is dien naam? wo laat is de ontbijt? wo seggst di dat op platt?* but my lips don't move.

why is there no plain heart? placid flame? no smoke rising into the arms of the cross? is this the blood i'm to drink? the body that will hustle me down the rubbery road if i have the cash? subject to display from exalted slanting.

i recall warped quilt shreds barely holding patterns of keeping warm. once stitched inside alabama gossip beside pluperfect purple hull peas on low boil. by hands that sprinkled rust on lunch for their daily dose of iron. rows of the back five set wide enough to plow under weeds. less food but less work getting it to forks. the throb of lightning bugs calling for others jar to jar leading us through summer pines. i could shoot snapping turtle snouts coming up for air from a hundred yards with my twenty-two to keep them off the bream bed. and ate duck eggs delivering twice the yolk to mix with biscuits and grits.

colors in triptych light are apposite to my ether: lavender. shop grey. cream. polishing earth tones paying homage to those who made pots. rubbing elbows with hollywood green. is that a zephyr tailgate party? no. it's the acoustic radiation from a fiddle deified by volume change. the sound hole geometry of advancing to coincide with a number: 41° 1' 16" n, 72° 8' 11" w. and marks the spot of last hurrahs before a not so famous exit. through the eyes of rabbit lab optics, a carrot morphs to a stick. i consider petty lumps as versions of walloped. it's clear my heretofore will pass through riddling phases. to be rebuilt with a thick impasto. with raw shimmer. the meaty view that stares down on vacancy. from what no longer surfs the air.

the small spat of rufous shadows split like spilt feathers of a ticking factory. a hawk lights close on a prickly pear. sun behind. thaumaturge. gunslinger. draws me into the terror of her gaze. i seem to have excellent radar defeat. like multiple

blocks of negative space. to be looking through an archer slit to a circus taking turns at acrobatics. to inner jump cuts. to what comes in the darkness of my needs. the hawk will speak. a row of letters parts her beak. i record this dispatch like mesh leaking hush. like footnotes troubled with drift. i repair sequence to transcribe damage intact.

the vista's been shaped with topiary shears. candy skulls stream from the waxing moon. we go deep into the code freeze of a snow western. the coldness of stances. where the future smell of a quad-shot cortado waits on a stand. in an alcove. below a staircase. everything being captured on a bedsheet in a film buff's basement.

a bell rings. a door opens. the host puts down his news. shadows stack. stocking stops. all turn to the entrant. pre-sale smiles shape mouths. i'm here to buy paw-safe sidewalk salt for a dog long gone. feel ladders swell. furniture flinch. in an eight-count move passing back of the other we return to facing. prey and pursuit circling in a special pact.

redisposing sums. dancing inside a many volta-ed thing. i fear these enclosing spheres may block my would-be ascent. i am all of these, but which is the i that is me? *be my colloquist. my colorcast. my calloused conquest.* and wherefore these voices? have mercy...

stars poke through the gloaming. spirit riding rays. seeking equivalent dust as the term of their shining. abstract degrees preserve aspect ratios. posing a pure path to the bears. performing the far-flung blanket and the infinite inside me. fair to say, wet finger in the air,

adverse wind will always stay. requiring sharp attending. i reach for the hawk. a changeling chancing shy embrace. she pixilates into the blur of a dervish. a low thrum tenders the night's reply.



☞ Ken Taylor is the author of 5 books of poetry including, variations in the dream of X forthcoming from Black Square Editions (2024).



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