

Book of Revelation

In response to "Rustbelt" by Drew King

In the beginning;
in the vacuous star bowls
of dust and dark and light;
in the violet trowel scoops
of life-sludge, algae-baking
in the grooves lining the back
of a beaked reptile of progeny;
in the flora fauna festival of
mitochondrial mutation and
angel-electric cell-wall mortaring;
a fall, a demon skull, lava explosion,
meteorite wrecking ball, supernoval fist,
landed, Eden-interrupting,
in the rising dome of the creation tortoise.

That shell-shatter,
detritus of breath-quickening,
soaking in the final drips of god-muck
and buried along fresh-water shores,
seeded these baked-clay streets,
iron bones blackened
into the scratches of crow roads and railroad polish.
And the disjointed people here,
grafted of Saturn-smoke and fungal alloys,
coughing the blackness of fractured cigarettes,
flitting through ant trenches
and tommy gun warrens,
these people live the tongue-torqued and
plume-battered existence,
growing crooked between
the black-and-white shark corners,
up around the falcon swelter of pigeon wreckage,
up, with the persistent deathlessness of
dandelion faces,
open-eyed, open-mouthed,
and always seeking sun.

T.M. Göttl

His Corrugated Lack Of Light

In response to "Pile 1" by David Masters

Today, this day,
the right hand of God
dares you to take notice
at His corrugated lack
of light. He points
directly at the split
between land
and sea for you,
exposes the intricate
latticework of tendons
beneath that which
you can only perceive
as aquamarine.

Here, beneath His hand,
is where Dante weeps.
Here, beneath His hand,
is where limbo, lust,
gluttony, greed, anger,
heresy, violence, fraud,
and treachery
fall prey to gravity,
clattering relentlessly
upon the unlit
firmament.

Steve Brightman

Away From The Drastic Sun

In response to "Tucked Away" by David Masters

At heart,
I am not a gambler.
At the bottom
of my heart
that beats 600
times per minute,
I want to play it safe.
I watch.
I look for patterns.
I see that
man is narrow.
He does not look up.
So I play it safe.
I hide my young
where he does not
look.

Gravity is always
less gamble
than violence, so
I hide my young
above the
cruel heart,
amidst the
dusty clapboards,
away from the
drastic sun in quiet
lemon yellow
eaves.

Steve Brightman

A Relativistic Fable

Inspired by the exhibition theme: "Space Divided"

Once upon a time, in the not too distant past, there lived a Space who believed she would always be divided—not from herself, but from Time. It was the Law: Space was Space, Time was Time, and never the twain... We all know those laws.

So for comfort, Space turned inward to her ancient geometry—to its layers of polygons that gave form to her body; to the certainty of its theorems with their elegant, mildly arrogant proofs; to her geometry's dozens of Greek celebrities.

But she'd watch Time from a distance—Time wrapped in her black coat, her head down, dutifully tick-tick-ticking along in the dark. Always on that same path of hers, Space thought; always moving in that one direction. Poor Time, she said, all alone—where was she going?

But Space knew where Time was going—nowhere. Without Space, Time had nowhere to go. And without Time, Space realized, *she* had only the present—no past, no future—and without those, the present meant nothing.

One day there was a knock on Space's door. It was Time answering her ad for the vacant room. I could fill it, Time said, with shapes you've never imagined before. Time turned her head, and looked back over her shoulder—Please, she said, something out there is terribly wrong. Space knew it was the Law that was terribly wrong.

So Space broke the Law, she snapped it, she took Time's hand, surprised by its warmth, and invited her in. Soon, Space found that Time could make her laugh, and that Time's dark coat had a lining of light.

At the wedding, their great uncle Minkowski gave the toast: "The views of Space and Time that I wish to lay before you," he said, "...are radical." Space and Time loved their uncle, and so they thanked him, but they knew they weren't radical. They were just four dimensions in love, and that with Space giving Time a little Space, and Time giving Space a little Time, they could live together in the light, in the magical, absolute, same for everyone light.

John Donoghue

The Poem's Voice Throws a Tantrum

In response to "Patterns of Attachment" by Nicole Schneider

A work of art presents feeling...for our contemplation, making it visible or audible or in some way perceivable through a symbol[.] Suzanne Langer, *Problems of Art*

Poetic statements are no more actual statements than peaches visible in a still life are actual dessert. Suzanne Langer, *Problems of Art*

I thought what she'd written was, "A poem is no more about its something-said than a still life is about a bowl of fruit," but she hadn't—I ransacked the book—it was only the peaches thing, which is close, but still, not exactly the same,

so *I'll* say it, because to say what art is *about*—isn't that always the problem?

Like this poem—what's it about?

I'm not sure. I should be, I'm the poet, I should be on top the poem's ideas,

its metaphors, its pivots, but instead—and I'm honestly embarrassed to admit this—the voice at its center today says that it's sick to the bone of managing the nit-picking algebra of subject then predicate then object,

sick of the tedium of laying down line after line after parallel line in the hope of a turn, a lift, an unfolding of wings. Today, it says, it wants to be a voice of shape, not time, it wants to say everything

at once, to be heard by the eyes, understood by the chest, the mouth, by the beautiful, clever hands. *Look* at me, it says—a code, black marks just lying there on the page, waiting for someone to come walking along.

Well, maybe it's *all* just marks on a page, I say, waiting for someone to come walking along. C'mon, let's do this—get up, take a breath, don't turn blue. And look—I've brought you a peach!

John Donoghue

The Space Behind the Lines

In response to "Jut" by Nicole Schneider

Intrigued by the void
The cold
Blackness of space
Accentuating teal lines
That play a game of object identification with the mind
 a musical staff
 or the silhouette of a country's flag
It's the black
 around a geometrically rambunctious rhombus
Offering a nice cold stretch of empty space
That gives one pause
 a solid background
 an absence of color
 a night sky without a star.
But it's the space
Behind the lines
 that draws a second glance
Hidden shapes and shadows
 behind vertical blinds
 playing peek-a-boo
 wondering how such objects float
 when devoid of atmosphere
The dusty white parcel
 a moon on which to land
 or a station on which to dock
Intersecting violet lines giving directions as we approach
Behind the lines
 swirls and shapes
 cosmic dust
 gravity
 pulls in, pushes out
 even in the void
 all things jut.

Lori Ann Kusterbeck

Pink Trim

In response to "Untitled" by David Masters

pink satin sheets

 pulled up
 tucked in
 folded
 over a flannel covered

1930s box frame

just a piece of a first world luxury

 hung on a wall

 here

 a mismatched set of textures

 as confused as a Lake Erie season

just a corner on which to rest my head

 and listen to the stories

 that echo through the walls, through time

when first married

they had no blankets

my grandparents

 so young

 so poor

starting together after the war

 had only their coats

in the days that followed

the factory on strike

 the rent due

 and a newly discovered little one on the way

their one suitcase packed

 following the road from Canton to Cleveland

gazing now at the warmth of thickly spun cotton

 with a cool satin silk spun sheet

I wonder if the springs creek

 upon the wall

what stories are left to tell

what textures against our skin

 will remind our next of kin

 of us

Lori Ann Kusterbeck

Glory After Rust

In response to "The Great Mistake #2" by Drew King

We are the rustbelt
Complicated, twisted
 sheets of man-made metal
All intertwined
Holding onto one another for dear life
Yet pushing each other farther and farther away

Lighting his cigar
by the smelting flame of the furnace
 casting sooty shadows upon the wall
Great Uncle Rockefeller would say
 "The way to make money is to buy
 when blood is running in the streets".
When I look at the mess he made and left behind
 it's a wonder he didn't milk the marrow from our bones
 and leave us as dust

Rust
 now litters our highways
 our side streets and porches
As we sit and swing upon polycarbonate plastic #4
 and scrap every bit of the ore and metal mined
 to line
 our empty pockets
Our industry depleted, exported, sold
 buildings decayed
and the holes left behind
 in our transportation
 our livelihood
 our education
need more than the Rockefellers
 the Carnegies, the Hays and the Wades
to repair
 our rust
 and garner our trust.

Rather give us new minds
 for a spit polish and shine
 and return our emerald city to full glory once more.

Lori Ann Kusterbeck

Lascaux, Ohio

In response to "Ohio" by Drew King

Lithograph prints of Elaine De Kooning
harken back to the relics
that line the cave walls
in the southwest of France

Painted with pigments
crushed minerals
carefully stroked and chiseled
into the earth
a prehistoric record
of what once
was us.

Two thousand years from now
among what's left of the Great Serpent Mound
valleys once named
from the Wyandot and Chippewa tongue
the Cuyahoga's, the Allegheny's
other burial and cultural hotspots
they will find the record of us
Ohio
as we are now, as we were then

our pigments of oil and tar
etched into the earth
with tie-rods and sway bars
they will speculate and contemplate
and abhor our treatment of the land

they will gaze upon this "golden age"
and proclaim these works
Lascaux, Ohio.

Lori Ann Kusterbeck

We Are Detroit

Inspired by “The Window” by David Masters

Crawl through an open window
at Michigan Central Station,
rappelling with a bed sheet.
Explore the grand lobby,
marble walls and desecrated murals.
Arrive in the concourse
by the silvery skylight glow.
There, among Doric columns,
build your new home.

It isn't as hard as you think
to live in the ruins of America.
We napped on the freeways,
the whine of leaf blowers
in our blood.
Yet we saw houses split open,
innards spilling onto grass,
dark eyes of broken windows.

We heard the stories
of people arriving,
trains coming day and night.
Our station was empty,
the land scraped clean,
birds flying through the windows.
This is the Detroit we know.
We never took root
in Grosse Pointe, Beverly Hills,
old wood and wallpaper in our veins.

We explored the city,
the arc of a rusting scrap mound
against the sunset,
a house with a castle turret
and a peach tree in the yard.
It was as big as a country,
still-standing houses
like towns we stopped in,
breathing the trapped air.

In a Corktown gallery
Detroit's youth clung together
like a raft of debris.

I saw “The Window” by David Masters,
a painting made from parts
of an old house: layers of paint
a palimpsest of history
showing the remnants of lives,
the skin and bones
of wallpaper and wood
holding secrets and memories.

Amy was a stray like me,
her feral look belying
perfect straightened teeth.
After a couple glasses of wine
I asked her to break into Michigan Station.
She said yes.
We shimmied through a back window,
climbed to the top –
the city spread out below.

We saw radial streets fanning out
from downtown. Highway trenches
that gobbled up neighborhoods.
Teeth of a street yanked out.
Low slung warehouses by the river.
Immigrant homes with tidy porches.
A ladder in the yard of a building.
Slows waiting for tomorrow's rush.

Over highways
that pumped cars out of the city
we saw old churches,
brick apartments
and empty warehouses
worth saving.

So we climbed down
into tall black headlines
that hid the fear:
We are Detroit we are Detroit we are Detroit too.
As dawn scraped the rooftops,
we took a ride to Belle Isle,
stopped at Rivera's *Detroit Industry*,
ate fresh fruit at Eastern Market,
slipped into an old house
with good bones
and peeled the boards from its windows.

Lee Chilcote

