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AIR BUBBLES

Three Poems

Wayne Koestenbaum | poetry & visual art | 126

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THREE POEMS

Wayne Koestenbaum

[blue tape-seam dividing]

blue tape-seam dividing debased sidewalk:

piss there, despite

sworn perv-abstinence?

stop mentioning lifelong tropism toward swollen

Stollen Swiss Miss

misbegotten *Hello, Dolly!*

a literary version of jazz hands he asked me

if I had: liquor

cardboard boxes flattened,

stacked, rope-tied.

wrapped nuptial mattress dead on street: green

gaffer's tape upholding

spring's Dylan-Thomas-

promised bog-surge.

her hennaed *Frühlingsnacht* hospice hair, a Bon

Ami scouring to undo

Napoli hostel boy-

teen flipflop-shuffle.

passing you, St. Vincent de Paul boarded up,

incorrigible fire truck

alarm ear-slashing

my zither opportunism.

hydrant water cock-plunges my sneaker-mesh:

beggar mouth and tyrant

mouth gagged by dialectic.

brutally Fitbit-interpellated, I fight bootless

back by fool-misplacing

wrist toy: reclaim it,

re-smooch w/ my

Fitbit jizz-interpellatee.

coveting your metallic sneakers, svelte flood-

trousered Puck outpacing

my origins-of-

totalitarianism lech-amble.

Stanley Tucci lookalike, veer away from me, IV

not finding its vein.

in pj's she street-squats on milk crate, doyenning

over the auto-frigging

moi-daveners.

noli me tangere anti-Semitism's mule-gait

a tapioca bubble I'll gum.

radio's Ella Fitzgerald Santa Claus is coming to town quashing

(or simply syntagm-

bumping) my kindred's

Botox stigmata, Yuletide

Juvéderm, AZT

joy-enwrap \$-pubis.

or Richard Tauber's daffodils frost-seared:

geliebt ermordet Stars
and Stripes grave-kilt montage.

[regret's a clod]

regret's a clod—pebble impurity—in soul-mesh:

rinse scrim, render it
deathbed-transparent.

is *idyll* idle or iddle? non-anti-Semitic lute-

pluck'd lake we
tremolo-pass.

dance tune: "love the gefilte fish you're with."

rock it.

aunt Brünnhilde, I wake thee from fire-circle—

incest-lust-heft pumping
heldentenor reparative
durational duress.

mensch of you in my turkey stuffing slays—

perineum's suspension
bridge, resolved.

dreamt he returned, fat-faced oiled prof

at moribund school
mailbox—dead letters,
dessicated wife, schizo son.

round mushroom-head of my heart you chop

death you subdivide
into half-moon minion-files.

we break ourselves apart to make new vision-

biscuits out of

nothingness: the circle wept

to hear itself described as rhomboid, square—

sever thought from action,

let circling reverie

unhinge itself from deed.

I made gouache shapes on Thanksgiving be-

cause I needed to re-

member I was reputedly alive.

imagining Hannah Arendt crooning Brahms

lullaby over my Jason

Gould pseudo-incest cradle.

lemon zabaglione curve of me creating

a nonsensical

reason to dream backward.

faux pas to ask for a blurber's copy: they dropped

my blurb from the book:

no shame to be an

omitted mouthpiece.

why shouldn't messianic time fill me, as if yr

cock in the bathroom were

messianic time's momentary

emissary cracking me open?

[upload to private]

upload to private album the yellow baseball

shirt photo wherein

I look Botoxed.

ladybug sentient yet stationary on Marimekko

shower curtain's blue

calyx flame.

dreamt a gay literary critic reviled me, tore

up my dorm room's

paltry wall-to-wall carpet

in Trilling rage-fit.

hordes of like-minded Wayne-haters gathered in amphitheater

to watch the slow

unpiecing—sleep cure

in snow-Alps a coddled Gulag.

nutty obscene tonic OCD Joan Crawford's

My Way of Life's

stomach gurgles from

unwise imaginary emetics.

strange unallegorical withies moving between a white

triangle overlap

an unevenly contoured

square (it won't forgive you).

osculum underwater wanting my participation

in immoral acts—tongue-

drama, "always up

for getting blown, mister."

“how thick is it?” thick enough to depopulate

Middlemarch—white

window-frame reflection

on black-jacketed Merleau-Ponty.

drapes acknowledging the slant “H” they bear,

flashback swastika

siphoned into

Mondrian eyelid-specter—

eye’s lid inside contains Mondrian

swastika condensation—paper

bag pleats echoing

crucifix or nude Raphael

Soyer limbs cut by horizon-line.

Lascaux butt, where human and antelope

converge—glute muscle

you’ll scapegoat (“she

let the ball drop”—

career condemners):

what was the ball? where did it drop?

Carolee held the ball—

j’accuse the male

old fart, *moi, toi*—

trois contes uncountable.

furry neighboring rejector, actor, dancer, mustache,

always a “th” in

your name to the-

atricalize its Irma Vep

(Vilna?) Ludlow-plush.

ghetto theater, curtain rod plunged into orifice

named “me” for

shorthand, explanatory

ease—to lube the theorem.

WAYNE KOESTENBAUM — poet, critic, novelist, artist, performer — has published twenty books, including *Figure It Out*, *Camp Marmalade*, *My 1980s & Other Essays*, *The Anatomy of Harpo Marx*, *Humiliation*, *Hotel Theory*, *Circus*, *Andy Warhol*, *Jackie Under My Skin*, and *The Queen’s Throat* (nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award). His first book of short fiction, *The Cheerful Scapegoat*, will be published by Semiotext[e] in April 2021. This year he received an American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Literature. His literary archive is in the Yale Collection of American Literature at Yale’s Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. He is a Distinguished Professor of English, French, and Comparative Literature at the City University of New York Graduate Center. Find him at www.waynekoestenbaum.com.

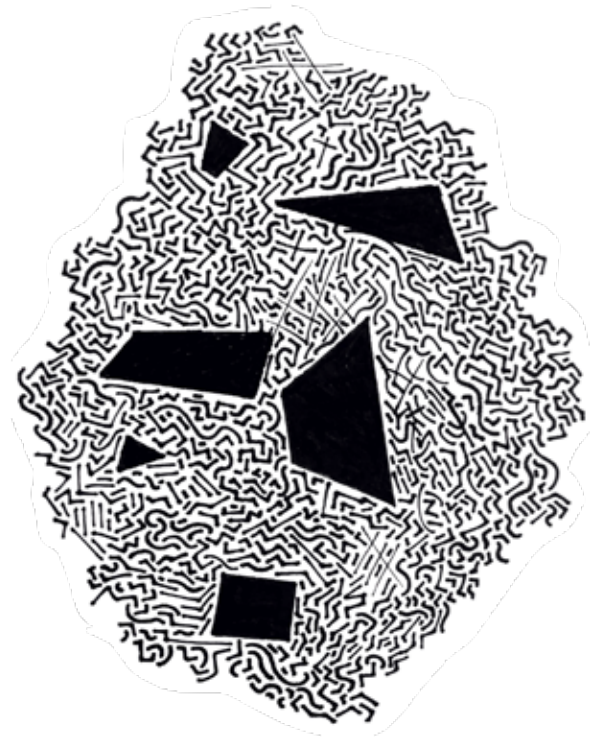


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