

Young Boy Riding the Wave of Desire Out of This Poem

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The young boy who is about ten years old and sitting on the front step of a burned house and bouncing a small rubber ball on the charred garbage strewn sidewalk where the fire blackened wood planks lay across one another and to the boy in his mind resemble a group of sleeping Catholic priests still dressed up in their dark frocks, watches the way that the sea gulls encircle the waste at a salvage yard across the lonesome street from where he is sitting, and to him they resemble birds with idiot clown faces and flapping wings. He folds the memory like a scrap of paper. Puts it deep in himself. And later, when he is a grown man and he's left all this burned world behind him and he's in bed with some woman he loves, he will see his own face in his mind resembling a familiar sea gull flapping up and down again over all things beautiful or mute—as if desire were something odd and birdlike, really, and with two wings. And love will somehow be a dark burned house he'll have to swoop into or out of—as an act of survival or desire. And so it will take an act of beating wings and a warm hearted woman, some source of light or salvation that will take him into her waiting arms so that he relives that bliss again—of being delivered from darkness into light, which is really what the dance of love is. Now he watches a sparrow land on the burned red couch dragged outside after the fire. And there's a cat hiding there, a black one whose head watches the small ball being bounced endlessly up and down

off the squared face of the sidewalk, *down-up-catch and down again*,
down-up-catch and down again—until the repetitive mathematics
of sound somehow echoes from the boy's right hand doing all this
bouncing so that the rubber ball seems to float momentarily the way
that a human soul will float at eye level just before the final exploding
back into that singular light that gave it its birth. And then the cat
lunges at the stupid bird—catching it under a quick paw, and one more
living thing expires. Now the boy, because he has chosen from the death
of the bird to see that he's *not* a part of this world anymore, but is in fact
is a soul trying to get free—which is the way that the spirit force, acting
through a sea gull wearing the ridiculous mask of a clown face flapping
its wings above piles of rain drenched junk at a lonesome salvage yard,
catches the boy's attention—and so it compels the boy's desire to learn
to let go. It's alright reader, now you'll have to follow me here. The boy's
going to have to disappear—because his whole future is riding on it.
And so the boy looks up at a small moving pulsar of light hovering
above his right temple—and it bobbles like an epileptic angel, a small
glowing arc of turbulence battling the air with its wings. And he sees
what no one else here sees: which is the way that a sea gull enters a boy
who's been stung by the angel of homesickness in a burned out city,
because together they're the knock of the spirit force—the here and gone
in one, and it stirs in him a desire transform himself. Now he hurls
the rubber ball backwards into the great gut of the house where it bangs
and bounces into rafters until it soars into the backyard, a flying
specter of lightburst into fruit trees somehow spared from the flames.
And he hears a shouting without a name. Some medicine name calling him
to jump through himself into turbulence. The jump in and out of turbulence

must be the holy act of arson for the spirit. Nothing in the human body can comprehend it. The arc of desire is the fire we breathe. And so the boy sets something inside of himself on fire. He watches the burning flames. All the leaping sizzling embers from the fire are the high stars he reaches for. And because there is nothing else left in this place but the rancid stench of old smoke still hanging like threaded milk from the burnt tree branches—which resembles the style of death the boy will live in until he jumps out of it here in this moment holding fast to the page—the boy runs through the house which is the burned afterthought of his own body reflected on the pavement, here in the figure eight written into his brain. No cop car slows down to watch it. No father or mother, no brother or sister. And he resembles a spiral leaping through ashes, over and over again until all the burnt images—the black cat with the bird in its mouth, the sea gulls, the him, all riding the wave of desire, are gone. □