

Tom Houlton

[For A Long Time She Stands There]

For A Long Time She Stands There, Given To The Dreadful Clouds Crossing The Stars, Racing
To Nowhere

And you're frantic - no record seems to fit the air,
And down, way down in the pit of your stomach
Is the fear, the absolute dread of what may be.
Words run slipshod, all across the page and onto the desk and away,
And you try to catch them in the net of your head,
But deep and troubled the head rolls inwards, implodes
Without a sound or sight of anything unusual -
And the sheets creak in the night as you wrap up warm with worn-out future thoughts,
Of poems half-remembered, long ago destinies rolled up and placed in possibility
For time upon time to revisit as you swing down through the lines and rhymes
Of everything you see (trying so hard to relate it to tragedy),
And wondering, as you roll into the snug sheets, if ink will stain your hands forever.
Does it wash off, I wonder, does it truly subside and quietly die in a corner like the living things?

With dreams you wake, and feel as if you'd never shut your eyes, never ever not been seeing
words before you,
The guilt and hideous shame of not doing, rather than doing different -
The half-formed house
Of the brain trying to crystallize, but so often falls at the first hurdle,
Snaps like a rope whipping in a breeze on a desert-plain,
The pitch-white lake bed bare of life,
All mountains and hills around,
Nothing living in this landscape
Save mustangs high up in the hills.
Surely a tragic loading,
Something to analyze here.

Nothing can stand for itself, you know, nothing can even be a thing without anything,
For something always exists -
Watching others, irregularities abound, and you realise how very different we are,
And the loneliness breeds like dysentery down every corridor,
And everything becomes impinging, a necessity for greed and proof of love or life, no loafing
here.
And people don't look at the sky anymore, not unless it is tragic,
And even if you thought it was,
You must plan what you say,
Control what you say.
You can never just say it,
If you say it people will hear,
Then where would we be?
In a tirade of sad sad songs, and sadder looks longingly out at a patch of grass with the sun on it
and a rabbit or two - pretty scene, but where's the tragedy?

Back to the books,
Back to the justification,
The deliberate slow conundrum of complexity (if only I could remember those long words more
better),
Ranging over the snow sheets, stained now with black, what if one day all the books drew
blanks?

There'd be nothing to write about for one.
(but they'd find something)
They'd say it was tragic, most likely.
I think the sky is tragic,
I think it is tragic because it is never not there.
Feel free to argue with me.
At least when you read me I'm not there to reply, cannot defend, cannot explain with a hand or
description - no visual aid,
No images allowed, the written word is paramount, the universal word, a thrifty fox-thought,
golden delighted kept at bay from the quiet and rustling examination halls.

This is my revision, it has no structure and no plan,
The points perhaps are good,
But slightly blurred and ill-conceived,
But cram enough inside and surely in a week or two
A miracle will occur,
A sonnet or tetrameter will appear as if by magic,
Out of the magician's hat the rainbow bunny of being able to remember the names of the metrical
forms,
So easy to learn.

I digress.
I always digress.
I apologise.
It is tragic, it is all tragic,
At least, that's what I'm told, that even the comedy is tragic,
Well, if you say so.

I have no idea,
So I picture the Ramsays' sitting room and listen to music whilst I work
And let the words go on like I'm not there.
I hate doing it, but I
Shut my ears to Antigone, blot out my dear's words.
They can't be talking to me.

I'll be interested to see how it all turns out.

I change the disc, it is not a record (I did lie to you once),
And see if this one fits, but
It misfits, kills a bell in a burning crucible.
The cat yowls, and it all comes
Beautifully crashing down,
Life flying in.

Everything I Ever See Was Comin' Or Goin' Away. Same As You. Maybe The Only Thing
Is... The Knowin'