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Three Poems for Booth

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Abstract

Three poems, including "Meditation on Subjects," "The City Experiment," and "Fabulist Trees in Chrome Landscape."

Keywords

John Gallaher, poems, poetry, meditation, city, trees

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meditation on subjects

*So it seems the body is this tent
you stand behind. You walk around a bit
and the body is just standing there.
You come back renegotiated
and the tent's moved to the front yard.
The neighbors will see. They're sure
to call someone. And you know
you're still talking about the body,
it's still your body. Call the street
"Cat's Game" and the city "Robot Hands." Call your friends
and they're talking
from behind tents about Cat's Game
and Robot Hands. How long has it been like this,
and does it mean you do or don't get to sleep with the pretty people,
when they've all become so ungainly, so
kind of charming and such odd things
to count on? So it seems*

*you're suddenly so perceptive
you maybe should try some profession soon,
or board game. Begin anywhere. Walk up the street to the left,
and it's a tent in motion. A list of fragments
you have to recite when you come across others.
Luckily, you don't have to know what the words mean
in order to say them. Like "there are a lot more afternoons
and sensible investing." And reasons for subjects,
when they contain their opposite,
as all things do, or are said to.
Can you contain your opposite then,
and coast all the way down?
Luckily, it's not a real question. And it's not
a real tent. And the weekend is almost always on its way
with its own hollow places
of easily painted landscape over crowds of people.*

the city experiment

*There were other things we liked, of course,
when it wasn't important to be careful, and the weather cooperated,
with the knowledge that this moment
is going to be repeatable, and more comfortable than better things, but still
that light strain that maybe it really isn't all that repeatable after all,
at least not with you, and even this has to end, and rather soon,
but at that moment cocktails arrive
so we can crest, and whatever we say fits
or fits well enough. Yes to the cocktail, because we're polite, then yes again
to sudden comments regarding next time.*

*We spent all night on the city experiment, but the whole thing
barely moved, and now we're worried,
though the formula looked good in the congratulatory lighting,
and we had this feeling that we might be able to push through
to the other side of what this is,
and it'll turn out to be a movie set, and you'll be walking the carpet*

*to an award show. Yes,
you immersed yourself in that role. Yes,
so that you believed that you were indeed that person over there,
and thank you, it sure was something, and you're going to miss it a bit
now and then, but next season it'll be a museum
or some people digging in a field.
That's the point where it always spills all over the table.
We're starting to get desperate. Wasn't it warm in the sun
through this window in winter, the snow outside? I'm sure it's something small
we've overlooked. What type of cocktail, perhaps. Perhaps survival
is a state of mind, in your floating future, there in the experiment,
on the ride into the city, past the tennis courts
and trees, and an old harmonium someone put out by the curb,
a trace of broken china, a fleeting study
of a figure in a field, until you're writing notes on a napkin
that blows into the lake, and you're hearing the flat echo,*

fabulist trees in chrome landscape

*Your life is on the other side of a fence
throwing things over the top at you.
Every now and then
it peeks over to see what you look like
in your new hat. Your new shoes.
I hate it when the city gets this way,
when everything sparks
unexpectedly. Too many reflections
of hats. Too many catalogues.
And clowns in the trees,
so that you may almost glimpse them.
One could think,
perhaps, that they're trying to sell you a uniform,
but subtly,
as they're neither speaking
nor holding uniforms.
And all around you
a series of lines indicating movement
radiates.*

