

Richard Martin

Learning Curve

Night perfect against the skin.
This update contains miscellaneous bug fixes.
Dear Search Committee: Did you find it?
Transcendence looms in the sky with everything else.
Take marigolds,
The sentry posted at the end of the street.
You're on file in my camera.
Someone said: "We live by a digital thread."
The cactus bloomed.

We could say the planet is under stress,
Delve into periodicals on time,
See the rule book for details.
It's possible we're haunted by nothing.
If I hear the word "quark" one more time...
O back in the day of hands on thighs.
The ability to park in weeds of hope.
I had a plan – a map of praise
In the glove compartment.

I've studied what not to get.
Rings laced with fingers, sounds about right.
What stays in Vegas, huh?
There are problems with shrapnel, flying debris
And boots on the ground.
My talking head is not your talking head.
Where'd you put my manifesto –
The one with the recipe for an advanced civilization.
Neocortex fired by light.

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Cognition on the Lam

I gave it my best partial understanding.
You said: "Let's not get caught in the middle
Of someone else's conversation."
The door clicked shut.
We could expand the house or consciousness.
Cosmic –
That word again in that context of cosmetic.
Who couldn't use an astronomical makeover?
Sunspots, sweetheart, in the House of Zodiac.
Go heavy on the blue mascara.

The alchemy of the blues,
Stay with it or stay over.
Again, the subtle magic of asteroids heading
Toward us.
"He went down in a barrage of books."
That's what his mom had to say about pronouns
When referring to me.
Through the telescopically-trained eye, another offered.
The beat and tempo of space, after all,
Feels good, don't it?

I neglected to post or recreate the moment.
I saw you jar those fireflies.
A hemlock forest, wasn't it?
So, this is the best time to learn a foreign language,
Consider posterity or a new sobriquet?
Weren't they talking about Son House –
The efficacy of motorcycle affairs
In a turbulent age?
Yes, once in a blue moon occupies
These lines fully.

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Go the Length

We backfired on us,
Then the prelude began.
I caught a fly-ball in an unmanned hat.
Jets over ahead continued their climb.
You may have not heard of the Sloan Wall of Galaxies.
Imagine a wall of starlight 1.37 billion light-years in length.
Once the astrophysicist left the party,
I opened the *Guinness Book of World Records* to potato salad.
Fascinating how many potatoes it takes.
Light never packs.

Vast is a term of reverence.
Avast ye matey: Next stop, please.
Remember, Meg played the flute
During her trek across the universe.
The edict simply stated: "Keep politics out of poetry."
Until I had a dog "faster than flies on shit"
Was just another cliché.
The History of the Taffy Pull was an interesting read.
That's OK, we were told not to wear flip-flops
In the candy store.

So did you hear?
They replaced childhood with a set of tests –
Exams on the nature of reality in a Post-Technological Age.
We heard about it while on our self-sustaining raft in the Pacific.
Man overboard, maybe.
I'm not sure if advanced Stone Age tools
Would advance our mission.
Childhood was an invention of the leisure class.
Vowels and consonants are toys.
Get over it.

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The Speed of Not Yet

1

I move through spacetime
Like a caterpillar in a jar of honey.
Where are my jet skis?

Yesterday, before the Committee of Ribbons,
I spoke of a tower of water
In a desert café of hollow suns.

Forgive me, I've enlisted your name
In a drone of paper plates
On route to nowhere.

2

There's been a known invasion of screens
Into the pickled brain.
The bartender checks the wine glass

For water spots and wipes it clean
With a white napkin.
Every day someone gets up and punches

The earth in the gut.
It could be you or me.
Stars shaped like ships shove off.

3

I have abandoned the body of sex
In the basement of dreams.
Celestial objects were young once, too.

Time wears out before its rebirth.
We all contend with storms of memory –
The way you surfed a wave of light,

Offered beauty tips free of charge.
We're here to access an eternal footing –
Mine darkness for what we hope to say.