

THE THRESHOLD OF ERASURE
JAKE LEVINE

The Threshold of Erasure by Jake Levine

© 2010 Spork Press

THE THRESHOLD OF ERASURE

1

a snow begins the fall / monitors turn static

the town sips peppermint tea for the first time
across white lawns / shells that grow tight
around our flannel armor / suddenly unfamiliar

from the 40 year dream / a lukewarm bath
in this ebb / autumn bodies pile
dropping like a bar jukebox at random

you / trapped on your porch with the mutt
who caught you / child / running away / my feet stuck
in the slow boots I was born into / scared
I extend my arm to comfort where the dog should be

2

out back the monster on mescaline swallows a car / it's not hard
to be a monster / to yes instead of no/ throw back carcasses
stuffed with angels / the princess sad as sequins fallen from a dress /
the ibuprofen to ingest / this many to undress / morning hung-over

left inky in a whiskey sidecar / she slides outside /
the dartboard grows lonely / she sips her deathly flask
but she is still my friend / the holiest half of what's left
on a flame in the wind / and later and sober
I am the monster that ate all my friends

3

I am not John A Johnny B or John D / he draws swastikas
in his guacamole with salt / six virgin maries
for st guadalupe st augustine and the blessed / bail us
from apathy / bail us from indifference / bailing us
always is my flame tooth grin /bigger
than deaf thunder that haunts a woman's hand

lightening / that man behind the menu who knew beauty
who carves heart's cavity with a toothpick / hollow
you can hear his echo / sweetest song /
the bloody mary not the virgin one





4

tied by string by tug boat
captain John pulls and wets his horn / blow me
Nietzsche / the sea teaches / minds that drop hot
grow dreadlocks / I love it / you throw hands
in the air in the funeral parlor / Rasta Papa
slumbers under his girl's leather sole

and twists his metal sheet / in midnight's mindlight
she bleeds / she sleeps / at dawn
he burns one / he gets oratory / he alone
flickers / inside the black speaker wires splinter

5

rest his grave/ Eazy-E
the unmelody / for no tune or spoon by knee
in more than 40 years of dream / my hairless head in my glass
in my martini / everyday's my birthday / and on the siren's cliff
the sexy lick their friends instead of me

meanwhile I gather bones for notes
to hurl against the sea's speech / see / the seagull
that's me / in the gold suit / that dastardly parrot
fires off a salty note / *fuck* graffiti on the side of the boat
the baritone / confused / the paper crown / brave
and neither talks shame in the lounge / they ice
they flail / I wash them down / bitches

6

as sweet as one of the lollipop ballerinas in neon buggery
flailing until the night light turns dawn / fatly salivating
I venom eyed and woozed / wouldn't have poked the bone
had the bars not closed at 2 / just enough to resuscitate our first copulation

marriage is epilogue / the sea is preface / she decides
to eat a mountain / swing fire / chase clouds
upside down / her fist bumps the mirror / sees its face in the crowd / frowns

7

dear mob / sorry he was rowdy on the floor
with his hull injured by the monster he had to drink / he had to murder
historically speaking he had to eat 6 cheeseburgers / has to commit
to mistake/ with repeated resolve
place a laser jam in your dish saucer / a girl
to get over a girlfriend / an ex to get over the girl /
he sleeps in his body / and whether with women or words
he's in love with a cinematic quality









I US A IS M
T H E
MONSTER

8

sick of stuffy letters / sick of books / sick of something
comes from something / a roll-top desk / an ashcan / a melon
she rises from the shampoo bottle and poof
she wants to try new princess pants / she is sick of her gown
with the slow-jams in poolhalls she rolls into town

he chalks up the felt tip / cues ivory / hits the pocket
with his stick / the room thickens / splits
his memory of grandma's petri dish

all of a sudden / a land of zafu and zabuton
where the world is blossom / and the cherry tree denudes
his mistress's bosoms / the flowers / her hair /
he learns tai chi and sips chai tea

9

when Walt shines his shotgun / ghost-Walt disappears
rustles lost in reeds along the sea / his shagbeard grey / openly
serious / I is serious business / I has come to bear weight

a naked clam is all pearls in his hairy hands / and that is the finery
of blather occupied with a sea hag / too young to be a sea siren
so he finds himself another one / a finely aged tongue
and they wear each other's asses on their faces for a season

watching movies / eating green / being vegan /
licking the pinprick gash in his lover's boat
the monster who taught him to eat her / wear her
skin for a coat

he learns his lover by licking her toilet hole

10

I put her in a mink coat in a bed of cauliflower / a final wish
for the flowers to feel better/ melted velveeta for disease /
sweet n sour for the dark spaces / unleash the dog
and let it romp on / the holes maintain their stain

our crusade flopped / all the good men lost
and John is in fear / with faith / not profligate
nor halfway dead sitting at the desk
trying to invent the future / the violins ballet / their wood splits
until someone croaks in the orchestra pit / the future
is birdless / trees grow alone / “the future is acausal / growing
spontaneous with moral sensitivity” / but never could he future
he is not an inventor / and all his friends are in media res

11

a sonoran hotdog vendor / his broken heart /
the one eyed magician / her empty hat /
a pregnant male stripper / the lustrous wonder
in dusk light means we're living / the stray cat atop a tree
claws new dove chicks / my bed grows empty
on purpose / the fragile angels solicit
the seasonal homeless / get frisk with their black dogs
in this room / by the window / my dust along my stuff gets wiped off
ordering nothing not be clean / I am building a new beginning





12

between brambleberry and pink lady is she
miss sweet thing / picking a cantankerous fruit
inside a tunnel across the road / an earthquake / hatred
runs the tunnel like a flash flood / the clouds mock me

children's faces stare down hopscotch players
they eat rain / this is no time for roses / I leave a dozen
at her door / wrapped in a boa constrictor

my beautiful enemy / clouds / they scramble my symbol
purposely cut my chords / the signal is shaft
growing a bridge on my back / I wear the tunnel / a gunny sack

no more / wilted petals and snakeskin stretch on her porch

13

natural as fruit morphs to pit / my paint roller
coats the virgin walls black / wrists disassemble
from arms / hands climb inside the womb
fondle organs and spread the mouth inside out

a face is gum and teeth to spit her name between
no difference / pit or seed / no memory / what was pulp
what is skin / no earth left for us to plant it in

14

you know the knoll where daisies grow
and the rabbit I drowned in bleach / you wonder
how you fit in / if this is the state
of parking garages / premium condominiums

it doesn't matter / the souls of the dead will swallow
the local interstate and bunny bones / shattered hubcaps /
oblivion with daisy petals / explosions from our hair

this epoch frazzles / without our hair / dance until dead
we do the drug because of our parents / no different than our parents
who did it for their parents / we are indifferent

we want history to give us a name/ our talk / shackled
we lie / eat / don't want to die / on the sharp edge of words
we manage / survive

15

he sits down to write the letter / but he is not ready
what with his heart too heavy to hold in his hands
he turns his sight from human ignorance to his pipe
turns his vigilance into a bag of shag
light enough for him to hold in his hands
he grabs a hand and smokes his mrs.
he hands the shag to his vigilance / you want in on this?

no / she was wrong / everyone is gone
but he misses his mrs. / he misses his mistresses
and religiously bred / must he now live

16

the arrogance of a broken empire / bottle shells that fizzed darkness

now they're boxed up and now I am burning / now
I am burning the receipt / this improv death night
where everyone knows my name / on the wood bar
I touch everyone's hands with my hands / kiss the flask until it's dead
kiss the void that is the body / kiss the body that is the receptacle

a hollow bough of a tree / a whale skeleton
a shell of a sunken ship / a sailor's flesh
as fish as sand is dirt on land / as forgetting precludes evening

so that dirt is everyone / so that it is a pleasure to meet me
a pleasure to run fresh dirt through fingers / running in the field
where we came from

in the field where nothing repeats there is rhyme
and with rhyme / retribution

in this quiet place I am learning to speak / Jonah
months deep in the belly of the whale / wondering
if G-d has forgotten me / this is the threshold of erasure

I am ready / I am ready to give / I am kneeling
at her body/ stuffed with dead trees / inscribed in the coral reef
she blossoms up from the bleach

and never can I forget the sound that I gave faith / faith
making love on its own wet grave /and the living grass / smashed

