

Present Continuous: Commentary and Form

Diane Sophrin

Poems

**A digital copy of Sophrin's poems are available to view on our website: www.studioplacearts.com*

WORDS

Words are needed
to send down roots
cast eyes up
let the mind spread
laterally.

Words are concrete
form is play
color too easy
all too easy
emptiness.

Words give voice
to act
form and color silent
tangibles to hide behind
masking an imbecile's
mute expression.

- Vermont, 12.20.17

OLD STORY

An old story
a re-run, a re- hash
asleep at the wheel
again?

Wolves in sheeps' clothes
mincing with radiant hooves
minks and glittering teeth
Dead eyes.
In packs, in hordes,
Glide in for the lunch.

- Vermont, 12.20.17

MIRACLES

The rich suck the air out of our sky
Not enough oxygen
Money talks
The rest of us
breathe
Like fishes out of water
filled to the gills
with miracles.

- Vermont, 12.24.17

SOTTO VOCE

Too loud, too strong
don't overstate your case.
Can eyes be pried open
by truths mouthed sotto voce?
Frigid winds whip and gods rage
No.
Divine Passion is not for us.
Cool reason mixed with faith
Is all we've got in our pocket.

- Vermont, 12.27.17

MESSENGER

I am only the messenger
balancing a big truth on my pinkie
as the sun ricochets off the frozen snow
and the frigid blue sky gleefully shrieks
affirmation.

- *Vermont, 1.1.18*

TOO LATE

Outside the mailman moves slowly though snow drifts
everything is bleached, cold
bringing bills and other trash.
Me, looking out with frozen feet
I acknowledge
this lack of trust
this crisis of faith.

Bad feelings about 2018
I feel it too
with an edge of urgency
with a sharp tongue
I must compress
no dilly-dallying with the senses,
get to the point
before it's too late.

- Vermont, 1.3.18

WRESTLING WITH ANGELS

Injured my rib again
wrestling
through these frozen black nights

Alone with myself
It was a tough struggle -
but I won the round
and now remember.

So the story goes -
there's some comfort in that.

Now - get on with it.

- Vermont. 1.9.18

UNWANTED GIFT

Temperature's rising at last
there's a thaw
right now
so much to say.

Skies are brilliant
white hard-packed snow
talks back
every step of the way.

Yank, pull
sound the alarm
don't wait
Belt out those truths

Roaring in the heart
soaring in the eye
Forget it
an unwanted gift.

- Vermont, 1.16.18

I. DOUBT

Doubting is a must
by which I mean
Merciless questions
Pursuing - *what can I say?* - truth

learned, felt, known
all's up for grabs
at any cost
Who taught me this?

Dots, connecting
shards of evidence
enlarged under the glass
Reveal both culprit, form.

Self-protection, principle?
scorn the beloved center
equilibrium is only found
Outside the box.

- Vermont, 1.16.18

DESPERATE ONES

Blackness is palpable
Deep enough to use
At last
I know what they mean
All or nothing now
The desperate ones.

- Vermont, 1.16.18

READING POEMS

Reading poems.
Language becomes poetry
Lyricism laughs in every moment
Quietly, easily, persistently
The mind unfolds beautifully
Life is good
Even when it's not.

- Vermont, 1.16.18

FREE AGENCY

Walking backwards
with an eye to the past
Watching the tracks tracing
the blood.

Walking forwards
with back facing front
Shoulder blades cutting
the present.

Backing into future
with face to the wind
of what was remembering
the past.

Backing forwards
With no eyes behind
the head is repeating
the sin.

- Vermont, 1.23.18

ICE AND ALLEGIANCE

The ice floes glide swiftly
with thoughts of allegiance
and truth.

These thoughts come later
the ice having gained the falls
in the cold sun
out of sight.

But who are you, after all?
Salty fish still on the tongue
the taste of truth and mystery
returning with thoughts of ice
and allegiance.

- Vermont, 1.25.18

PROWL

I prowl, hungry
hovering
nose inches from thing
sniff like an animal of prey
search for morsels of sustenance
or gems
to add to my own string of pearls.

Never mind what they say
it's the doing
I'm all paint now, chalk, paper
How they do it, that's the thing -
It's merely inside out for me
I hunt it down
borrow and steal
using booty like a changeling.

- Vermont, 2.7.18

RUNNING

running out of words
impossible
running out of time more like it
or just running
time standing still
all the while
look around
from every angle
hard to do frozen

- Vermont, 2.16.18

WINTER STORM REVISITED

Bomb cyclones descending
Snow attacks ferociously
striking fear
swooping like a pack of hyenas
or sky-darkening carrion crows
or gunners
or terrorists
– see *something?*
or a big fool with a button
– say *something!*
dancing us off the cliff
Into oblivion.

- Vermont, 2.18.18

MINE

First it was as a soft brown spot
palpable, round, tender
I saw it in the dark -
mine.

Then, it was clear
it presented itself
when they died -
just walked through
the door and
stuck out its hand -
Hi, I'm Death, glad to meet you.
I didn't realize it's been visiting ever since -
mine.

A round potato on the floor
sitting beneath the table
where it rolled
I picked it up
Hi - don't think we've met before
flesh firm and smooth in my grasp,
I put it on the counter -
alive in the silence,
the dead of night.

- Vermont, 3.14.18

SWINGING

Swinging
on a limb
hanging
in the thin cold air
no place to call home
unless you've got your head in the clouds
feet on the ground
gripping the parched soil with twisted toes.

- *Budapest, 4.3.18*

BLUE

Blue for example
We all know
it's a given.

Blue sky, kék az ég
how to say it –
everywhere.

But what is Blue
I mean, how does it look
and feel to you?

Ah, so it's feeling not fact
yours, mine – but not ours.
no Truth in Blue.

true blue, the blues, blue blood
blue blue blue blue
and so forth.

I see you see
Ki tudja who knows
Blue in Truth?

– Budapest, (30. Április. 2018.)

SILENCE

silence in the sunshine
waited for bad news
under heavy hot skies

the fat worm slithered off
subdued by sultry sunshine
by persistent inevitabilities

calm after storm
sweet stillness enrages
what to do with the fists?

loveless greenery surrounds
muttering blossoms
the lavish imbalance of

insidious peace glaring
in the sunshine
in the face of our fall

expelled banished parched
unforgiving weeds of our own creation
beg forgiveness.

– Vermont. (7.14.18.)

SCRAPING AROUND

Humid days
dripping with the sweat of events
feeble drizzles
wordless pall
the weight of incredulity, like an ox
lies heavy on the tongue
scraping around
to make new words
marks to fill another naked page.

Itinerant figures jostling
across stained sheets
just an excuse
something to scrawl
while time runs out
till the walls clang down
definitively
breathlessly
putting a lid on it all.

Vermont. (7.24.18.)

KILOS OF TRUTH

Kilos of truth
a foot to the neck
poisonous serpentine yoke
others seeking
an out

Humming
present
continuous
behind garden under firewood
in concert with weather reports

Buzzing
mad bees
swarming
electricity
hissing

where's it's going?
buzz
hiss
boom –
just wait!

– Vermont. (8.3.18.)

WHAT'S SHRIVELING UNDER THIS SUN - REVISITED

What's shriveling under this sun
what a raisin of an earth!
curdled hearts and minds
twisted souls
floating to the top

unrecognized
mutants rear their heads
on the horizon -
*tsunamis never experienced
poisons yet untasted.*

aghast, dumb
as if with cut tongues
we scream from the depths of our throats -
wipe out the evil before darkness falls
heavily, like a hideous chunk of coal.

– *Budapest. (October 14, 2018).*

BOOK OF CHAOS – II

Breakfast.

Behind the stolid silence
a night of strange murmers
hints allusions memories
mutterings confusions guesses
Chaos.

The Book of Chaos
there, it's named!
meanwhile between each page
coffee kifli
concerts art cakes liquor
and all the lesser things.

Peel back further still
pulsating beneath
Fear nodding
unknown known
in a sexy new suit.
Now we know
how they felt
before each maelstrom.

– Budapest. (10.16.18).

ILLUMINATION - II

Yesterday I saw it
a life - changed
shifting planes
made their moves
sneaky, under my nose
tilting, under my feet
unrightable.

Today's not so bad
some sunny patches
even, bleached warmth
on the parched dead grass.
Illuminating what is gone.

- *Budapest, December 15, 2018*

PULL - V

Pull at the line
it won't give
anchored
to a mammoth of a rock
an immobilized soul
fixed below.

Rising along
the taut cord
vibrating
with stubborn resistance
the remains of a life
unfathomable.

Waiting like before
at the white
cold table
for a presence
to walk in
offer a hand.

Peel back the silence
where do I go with this?
follow the line
outside
a bruised sky
call the cops.

- Vermont. December 29, 2018

AUDACITY OF PITCH - VI

Fumbling at threads
grasping at straws
where was I
before this new corrosive epoch
took off
before these ice-encrusted moments
took hold
now
settling in for the long haul
allow me at least
an audacity of pitch.

- Vermont. February 27, 2019

GREAT ILLEGIBLES

Great illegible scrawls
there - on the walls
in the clouds
hieroglyphs
pictograms
alphabets
tongues
quick-print texts
tacked up slapped up
glued on
layers
encrusted with fervor
desperation
rage in
unison
now or never.

- Vermont. March 17, 2019