

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Bernd Sauermann: Five Poems

Bernd Sauermann · Wednesday, September 10th, 2014

Bernd Sauermann is the associate editor at [Posit: A Journal of Literature and Art](#). He's had poems, stories and photographs published in *The McSweeney's Book of Poets Picking Poets*, *McSweeney's*, *Southern Indiana Review*, *New Orleans Review*, *Nimrod*, *Poet Lore*, *The Kansas Quarterly Review of Literature*, *Leveler*, *Mad Hat Review*, *e?Ratio*, *Vinyl Poetry*, and many other publications. He has a chapbook entitled *Diesel Generator* out from Horse Less Press (2013), and a full-length collection, *Seven Notes of a Dead Man's Song*, will be published in the coming year by Mad Hat Press.

Tropic of Cancer

Pleasure hides itself in the monsoons, in the shadows of palm and papaya, the jackfruit, the trembling stillness of the Tropic of Cancer, and like a snake, desire crawls the length of my legs. Spiders the size of my hands are everywhere, and as a keyhole turns around me like jungle, something in my chest burns like a heart.

The Wind in the Oleander

There's more to life than kites and string and a bottle of wine, and there's more to life than a bottle of wine and the wind. "You're dreaming," she says, "of oleander." "It's the oleander," I tell her. "It's always the oleander," she says, "but who sings from the bushes on this warm and fragrant evening while a kite flies tied to a windmill?" "I am the kite," I gently tell her; "you are the shimmering tether."

Small Numbers

The new year barely under way and already
I'm tired of rain and telephones. In silent
stretches of swaying wire our words pass
each other like flicks of light, while the
distance looms, dark, drawn out, and an
electric hum connects stiff pauses to
perceived meanings. Words coil like cable in
the silence, twisted from repeated motions,
the constant hanging up, twisted from you
insisting we are small numbers listed in a
thick book. The cord stretches. The numbers
add up.

The Sure Sign

I cover the miserable miles to the kitchen to
trash myself among the sheets of your last
letter in which you tell me you have died.
With a steady hand, I write back telling you
that, although I am not dead, I am now
invisible. I write this with an unseen finger in
the thick dust which has been gathering on
the table since we shared a meal made from
our last two potatoes. Just then everything
becomes very clear: they were our last two
potatoes.

Slow Dance

When? When will he learn that a slow dance
with the shy girl passes like a silent year in
the dark? When will failure not whisper from
the pauses between minutes shuffling like his
feet? When will these shoes not creak like the
door to an era closing?

This entry was posted on Wednesday, September 10th, 2014 at 3:03 pm and is filed under [Poetry](#).
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