

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Brian Rihlmann: Three Poems

Brian Rihlmann · Wednesday, October 21st, 2020

### STAND

Tonight, Friday night, I stand mid-street,  
an hour after sunset, looking west  
at a sliver of moon just above the horizon,  
like a clipped toenail, chasing the sun.

I stand where cars filled with the  
restless young ought to be thumping by  
on their way to Dionysian excess,  
to grind hips at dance clubs,  
to tequila body shots leading to  
tongue kisses, cars, bathroom stalls.

I stand here for several minutes  
until I see headlights, and step aside.  
The car pulls into a driveway down the block.  
Neighbors, now home for the evening.  
A breeze blows. A leaf skitters, lands at my feet.  
A tiny corpse, curled like a fetus.

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### JACOB AND THE ANGEL

Dad and I used to have “sock wars”—  
we’d take them off our feet  
roll them up into tight little balls  
and hurl them at each other  
laughing the whole time

or sometimes we’d wrestle  
that was fun, too

of course he'd always win—  
when I was little

but as I became a teenager  
there was less laughter  
more grunting, gritted teeth  
and protruding forehead veins  
and the words—  
“All right! That’s enough!”  
came more quickly  
than they used to  
and he’d quit, then  
but I never have

\*

## BLACK AND WHITE

you press me for an answer  
and when I give it  
you hiss—  
“liberal” or “socialist”  
the parroted epithets, empty  
but this solves it, solves me—  
I am caricature and scapegoat  
I understand...  
you want the black and white world  
not this grey soup, this fog  
they say babies prefer mobiles  
in black and white, too  
the contrast holds their attention  
their little eyes rapt at the patterns  
and who doesn’t love westerns, cop shows?  
black hats, white hats  
I love to watch Sipowicz  
beat a confession out of some scumbag  
he knows is guilty  
but the world ain’t a cop show, pal...  
and guilt is a hypothesis

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